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# A MID-VICTORIAN HINDU

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
RAKHAL DAS HALDAR.

BY  
SUKUMAR HALDAR, B. A.  
LATE PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICE, BIHAR.

WITH FOREWORD BY  
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## FOREWORD

It was with great pleasure that I acceded to the request of my friend Mr. Sukumar Haldar to write this short Foreword. For I rose from a perusal of his work with a distinct and vivid sense, that it is inspiring and informing, and that it will be a welcome addition to biographical literature.

The concourse of circumstances which makes a man "great" in the world is often of a fortuitous character. It did not fall to the lot of Rakhal Das Haldar. But the reader will find abundant testimony in this work, that he possessed the essential qualities of a great man—love of truth, sincerity and courage. He never hesitated to translate into action what he felt to be right.

The work gives the reader a good glimpse into the kaleidoscopic social and socio-religious changes which have been taking place in India during the last three generations—probably the most momentous period in her history. In Bechárám Haldar, the father of Rakhal Das, we have the picture of an unsophisticated, conservative, orthodox Hindu, scrupulously performing his *Pujas*, and quietly spending his long and well-earned retirement in his village doing various deeds of unostentatious and unobtrusive benevolence to his

neighbours. Rakhal Das presents as good a picture of a heterodox Hindu burning with reformatory zeal, establishing Brahmo Samajes, at one time even discarding his sacred thread, visiting England, and spending his life in ceaseless activity, literary and official, and dying a comparatively premature death—the result of the strain caused by his manifold activities. Then Rakhal Das gives us a peep into another class of changes which began in the sixties and which we shall give in his own words. At Purulia, the head-quarters of the district of Manbhum, he met, in 1866 “a few Babus with chequered *pirhāns*, socks etc., and remarked the changes rapidly taking place in our social habits. Ten years ago few would put on a *pirhān* or a pair of socks. Now even *āmlā* are sporting Kerseymere *chapkāns*, flannel shirts, English boots and shoes. Many young men of Purulia have learnt to drink wine and eat fowls. They are the sons and relations of bigoted people of the *āmlā* class.”

The book is interesting in another way. It introduces us to many intellectual and religious luminaries of the day, Indian as well as English, with whom Rakhal Das came into close contact.

The author has done well in giving the story of his father's life, as much as possible in his own words by making copious extracts from a diary

which he kept from an early age. He was a self-made man. He had no University education. But his style, his erudition, and the range and variety of subjects in which he used to take keen interest would put to shame many a modern graduate.

Altogether, the author could not pay a more becoming and a more enduring tribute to the memory of his worthy father than the interesting work which he now presents to the public.

50 CIRCULAR ROAD  
RANCHI  
19th FEBRUARY, 1921. }

PRAMATHA NATH BOSE.



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# A MID-VICTORIAN HINDU

## CHAPTER I

### FAMILY TRADITIONS

“There is a history in all men’s lives,” so Shakespeare tells us. It is not of a man known to fame, nor of one born with a silver spoon in his mouth that we propose to write, but of a humble individual who, during the comparatively short span of life allotted to him, tried to do his own little bit in his own little sphere. It was during the busy period of internal reform which marked the administration of Lord William Bentinck, in 1832, the year of the English Reform Bill, when our eminent countryman, Rammohan Roy, who is described by the celebrated Fanny Kemble in her “Record of a Girlhood” as “that most amiable of all the wise men of the East,” was winning renown for himself and respect for his country in far away Europe, that the humble subject of these biographical notes, Rakhal Das Haldar, was born at Jagaddal, a village on the left bank of the sacred Bhagirathi (the Hooghly river) opposite the French settlement of Chander-



nagore. It will not be easy at the present time to recognise in the populous Mill town-ship of Jagatdal (as the name is usually written) with its smoking chimneys and congested bazars, the quiet old village, smothered in vegetation, which was encircled by a double line of deep moats, connected at either end with the river, excavated in the sixteenth century by Raja Pratapaditya, to protect his Ganges-side residence against the incursions of the Mahratta hordes. In the days of the old John Company Jagaddal (which is mentioned by Chand Saodagar in "Kabi Kankan-Chandi" as one of the places passed by him in his voyage down the Bhagirathi) was the residence of several Brahman and Kayastha families and contained many large well-built houses amongst which the palatial residence of Dewan Fakir Chandra Sen was conspicuous.

Here is his own account of his ancestry as recorded in a family register : "Janardan Haldar was the founder of our family. His name used to be mentioned in the annual *Sraddhas* performed by my late father (Becharam). Janardan is said to have lived in Srinagar-Simulia (Nadia District). He claimed to be a remote descendant of the ancient sage Sandilya, who is mentioned in Raja Radhakanta's 'Sabdakalpadruma' as an author; in other words, Janardan was of the

Sandilya *gotra*. It is believed that Janardan was of the Kauthuma *sákhá* of the Sáma Vedá. The belief has been traditionally handed down in our family, as is the case in every respectable Brahman family. Its meaning is that we are descended from a Brahman family whose special vocation was the study of the Kauthuma *sákhá* of the Sáma Vedá. Janardan's nearer ancestors are believed to have been Kanya-kubja Brahmans ; it is stated that our ancestor was the famous Bhattanarayan, the chief of the five Brahmans invited by Raja Adisur to Bengal in 999 Sakabda (1077 Christian era). It is believed we are descended from that branch of Bhattanarayan which became known as Kusari, from the name of the place where the members of this branch made their headquarters. This branch of Bhattanarayan was not classed with the Kulins but was classed with the Srotriyas. From information received from Umacharan and Panchanan Chakravarti, who were probably interested men, my father traced our family to Nityanand Chakravarti (of Beneali), who lived more than 250 years ago. His son is said to have been Balaram who had two sons—Rupnarayan Haldar and Srinath Chakravarti. The latter is said to have been the ancestor of Umacharan and Panchanan ; and the former is said to have been Janardan's father.

My father credited the absurd story as to the origin of the surname "Haldar", viz., that Raja Raghuram Roy of Krishnagar made him an allowance of one *seer* of rice and twenty *gandas* cowries annually for each plough (*Hal*) in his Raj. Surely, the Raja's successor Krishna Chandra, the first Bengali gentleman of the period, had made a much less liberal allowance to our national poet Bharat Chandra Roy Gunakar. The surname Haldar owned by so many families and by so many castes in Bengal could not have been any other than a corruption of the word 'Hawaladar.' Such names (including Samaddar, Mazumdar, Pakrasi, etc,) used to be applied to petty Revenue officials during the Muhammadan Government. I am inclined to consider it safe to trace our ancestry up to Janardan Haldar. No particulars of Janardan's life are known. His son Radha Ballabh is said to have married at Hinjala (Pargana Ukhra) the grown-up daughter of one Ramgopal Chakravarti, a Brahman of the degraded 'Pirali' class and had thus become tainted. Radha Ballabh or his two sons Harinarayan and Indra Narayan removed to Jagaddal on the bank of the Bhagirathi near Mulajor (24-Parganas). Radha Ballabh's eldest son Harinarayan was the father of Durgaprasad, Ramprasad and Nilkamal. Durgaprasad first entered service under the British

Government, and lived in the Punjab for about 40 years ; he had two sons by a left-handed marriage—Jwala Prasad and Radha Krishna ; the latter died at the age of eighteen having shown remarkable powers of the mind. Durga Prasad's brother Ram Prasad was possessed of great physical strength. His sons were Brindaban Chandra, Gobinda Chandra, Iswar Chandra and another. In his declining age Durga-prasad came back to Jagaddal, where he lived for some years with his cousin Becharam, and then died at a ripe old age. Radhaballabh's second son Indra-narayan married Chitramani, (daughter of Ram-narayan Ganguli of Hinjala) who gave birth to one daughter, Sankari Devi, and six sons. Sankari was married to Mathuramohan Roy of Calcutta. Mathuramohan's daughter (Revati Devi) by another marriage was wedded to Kaliprasad ( Indra Narayan's eldest son). Revati lost her husband at the age of eight and lived for about seventy years, an example of a genuine Hindu widow. Indra Narayan was so strong physically and so expert in archery that he obtained the nick-name of 'Dronacharya'. He was exceedingly fond of the French nation and was a great lover of tobacco ; he had no liking for the English, and was somewhat eccentric. On one occasion, he quarrelled with his people at home

and went to the Ganges determined to die. He laid himself prostrate on the sand-bank and when a servant touched him in order to call him to dinner he suddenly got on his legs, furious at the idea of a Sudra having defiled by his touch the sacred body of a Brahman. This incident caused much merriment at Jagaddal at the time. Indra Narayan died a few years before my birth."

## CHAPTER II

### BECHARAM HALDAR

R. D. H. thus continues his narrative :  
“ Becharam Haldar, the yongest son of Indra-narayan, was born on the 16th November 1785. Before he was twenty years of age he accompanied his cousin Durga-prasad to the North-Western Provinces. In 1805 he got a clerkship in the Deputy Adjutant General's office at Mathura (Muttra), and subsequently served in the Commissariat and also in certain mercantile houses at various places in the North-West, till July 1818, during which time he had one daughter and two sons by his first wife, the daughter of Gour Mohan Chatterji of Bainchi, named Dayamayi. On the death of this wife in 1818 he returned home from the North-West, and about the year 1820 married Dravamayi (my dearest mother) the third daughter of Bhairab Chandra Chakravarti of Jagaddal. Becharam lived in Cuttack (Orissa) from July 1821 with his newly married bride and served in the Commissariat under Captain Littler (afterwards Sir John H. Littler, Deputy Governor of Bengal ). In July 1825 he hastened home with his wife, who was *enceinte*, the occasion probably being the death of my grand-father Indra-narayan. Mother delivered her first burthen on the 29th November 1825.

From 10th September 1826 to 20th May 1831 Becharam served as a clerk in the Executive Engineer's office at Chinsura, during which time his wife gave birth to two sons, Jiban-krishna and Phanindra-Chandra. The former is said to have been an admirable child, but he died, like several others mentioned above, very young. The General Orders of Government dated 20th May 1831 appointed Becharam as an Assistant Overseer in the Public Works Department, and he was posted successively to Chinsura, Bankura and Burdwan. On the 21st December 1832 I was born, it is said, through the grace of the deity Rákhál-ráj, whence my name. Through the recommendation of Captain Bell, Becharam was appointed on the 29th October 1836 to the executive charge of the Balasore District, D. P. W., and he began to serve directly under the Superintending Engineer. Mother having been in an advanced stage of pregnancy he left her behind, alas ! never to see her any more. On the 14th November 1836 Dravamayi delivered her last child, Harasundari. In pursuance of the inhuman and absurd custom which prevailed she bathed on the ninth day after delivery and became suddenly ill. She got violent pains in her mouth and was unable to eat anything. The ignorant fools about her called Ram-prasad Ojha of Gondolpara to treat her because they believed a devil had

possessed my mother! In the morning of the 23rd November 1836 Lal-mohan Chakravarti, a physician of Chandernagore, was called in but too late. About 7 A. M. on the 24th November this best of women breathed her last, leaving me to lament her death for ever. Mother, however, left a worthy protectress in my dear aunt Revati, who could not have held me dearer if I had been her own son. Aunt Sankari took charge of Harasundari, my little sister. Becharam scarcely allowed a couple of months to pass before he married Sonamani, daughter of Damodar Pakrasi of Basudebpur. Father was at Balasore up to July 1844 and throughout this period he was much respected by the Oriyas. He used to be styled as the Barrack Master Saheb. In 1844 he was appointed as Superintendent of Embankments in the 24-Parganas on Rs. 200 exclusive of travelling allowance. On arrival at Jagaddal Becharam caused to be constructed at his own expense a *ghat* or flight of steps on the bank of the Bhagirathi and also a masonry room and veranda for the accommodation of dying men at the river-side, near our house. How he worked may be gathered from Major Rutherford's diary dated the 22nd May 1845. The Major recorded that the work was highly creditable to the activity and energy of the Assistant Superintendent Becharam Haldar. On the 5th May 1845



occurred the Post Office hoax of Brindaban Hal-dar, about which father often spoke afterwards. Brindaban owed him some money and in liquidation advised the despatch of a parcel of shawls. Father got a parcel of rags and wrote about it to the Post Master and also to Brindaban. I quote his own words from his letter to Brindaban : ' I have paid Rs. 9 bearing postage, which sum I shall place to your debit, and if you are desirous of recovering the value of the shawls I would advise your prosecuting the Post Office department, for you must not think for a moment that I shall bear the loss, as I neither directed you to send me the shawls nor did you ask my permission. From the manner the parcel was secured I can scarcely believe that any shawls were sent by you in reality, for any person of common sense forwarding such valuable articles would be very particular in securing the packet with sealing wax etc'. Becharam lived in decent style and in November 1845 had his house robbed by a gang of dacoits. The Magistrate of Baraset held a local investigation in person, but the stolen property consisting of gold and silver ornaments etc., were not recovered nor were the robbers apprehended. In April 1846 father removed his family to Behala in the south of Calcutta and made various attempts to get rid of the Pirali taint by bribing the local Brahmans

but without success. In December of the same year the family removed to Kidderpore, where we long rented the house of Tarini Nag. In November 1849, while on inspection duty in the Sunderbuns, Becharam had a fall which severely injured his right hip and rendered him lame. He was treated by Bhola Nath Dass M. D. and Dr. Jackson, and through the exertions of Captain (afterwards Colonel) C. S. Guthrie, obtained in 1851 a compassionate allowance of Rs 50 per month. The Hon'ble the Court of Directors of the E. I. Company wrote in their Despatch No 32 of 1851 as follows : 'The greater part of Becharam Haldar's service has been rendered in the Department of Public Works, which class of employment does not qualify for pension under the rules. We are nevertheless disposed to attend to your recommendation upon the ground that Becharam Haldar was to a great extent incapacitated and his retirement accelerated by a severe injury to his right hip which he sustained in the performance of his public duty. In consideration of this circumstance we sanction the grant to him of a pension of Rs. 50 per month as a special case'. Becharam retired from the public service in the autumn of 1851.

"Before this period my paternal aunt, my aunt Revati and my step-mother had died and Becha-

ram lived at Jagaddal a somewhat lonely man till the 2nd August 1869 when he died of a sudden illness. For a period during his retirement he had completely lost his eye-sight but recovered it under indigenous treatment. On the 28th June 1856 he lost his youngest son and bore the loss well. In 1860 he had paid a visit to Gaya. During the famine of 1865 he fed daily in an unostentatious manner a number of persons without caring to seek the thanks of the public. Becharam was of middling stature, with a dark complexion and a tolerably agreeable countenance. He was not learned either in Bengali, Sanskrit or English, but he was naturally very shrewd and intelligent. His weakness lay in his being too credulous and too susceptible to flattery, of which not a few rogues took advantage. He had served the Government for more than 35 years and always with credit. Had he been dishonestly disposed he could have easily amassed a fortune; many people with far less advantages have become rich, but Becharam preferred honourable poverty to wealth dishonestly acquired. He was very proud of his compassionate allowance. He had an immense fund of folk-lore, was occasionally very witty, and was well-informed on many topics. He was somewhat irritable but his resentment was always short-lived. In religious

persuasion he was a Vaishnab and was a very orthodox Hindu. Lalit Mohan Goswami (his religious preceptor) of Khardaha relieved him of a good deal of money. Becharam had a number of idols in his house and he kept an establishment for their *Puja*. I annoyed him very much by my heterodox proclivities. Latterly, however, he was acquiring liberal sentiments and although he would cook his own food during the time that he was a widower he sanctioned the re-marriage of the pretty little Mokshada. I had given him great umbrage by throwing off the sacred thread, but we got reconciled to each other. One beautiful trait of his character was that he took great pleasure in feeding people. He was much vexed with my visit to Europe, but he lived to pardon me. He did not mix much in society. The ruling passion of his life was how to get rid of the epithet Pirali. He married my youngest brother, my sister and myself into untainted Brahman families and he spent large sums of money in entertaining Kulins; but all his efforts were unavailing. People often came to him for good advice. He was benevolent and he distributed medicines gratis."

R. D. H. was in Ranchi when he heard of his father's death and he started for Jagaddal as soon as the news reached him. At Purulia he put up

with his old friend Babu Chandra Narain Sinha. He had a long and tedious journey by road from Ranchi to Barakar where he entrained for Chander-nagore. He arrived at Jagaddal on the sixth day. He availed himself of the opportunity of removing from the house all the Lares and Penates including the presiding household god Janardan. To non-Hindus the rather arbitrary division of men into distinct classes locked up in separate water-tight compartments must present a curious spectacle. The origin of most of the Hindu castes is extremely obscure. There is a good deal of uncertainty surrounding the genesis of the Piralis; but it is known that it is mainly in the district of Jessore that a few families not only of Brahmans but of other castes, are classed as such. Outside Jessore only a very limited number of Brahmans of the Pirali class are to be found, in Calcutta and in two or three villages in the neighbourhood. According to Mr. (now Sir Edward) Gaît, Superintendent of Census Operations in Bengal ("Census of India, 1901, Vol. VI, Part 1, p. 170), the Piralis "became Muhammadans because they were out-casted on account of having been forced to taste (or smell) forbidden food cooked by a Muhammadan. Others have succeeded to a certain extent in recovering their original caste and have remained Hindus. They are named

after Pir Ali the Dewan of Khan Jahan Ali or Khanja Ali who ruled in the south of Jessore about four centuries ago. Pir Ali, whose proper name was Muhammad Tahir, was a Brahman apostate and, like all renegades, he probably proved a worse persecutor of his original faith than others who were Muhammadans by birth." Becharam Haldar's anxiety to clear his family of the taint by contracting matrimonial alliances with non-Piralis, preferably with Kulin Brahmans, was fully shared by the wealthier members of the sub-caste, like the Tagores of Calcutta, right down to the close of the last century.

## CHAPTER III.

### RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY EXPERIENCES.

In 1841 R. D. H. went as a little boy with his father to Balasore. He had commenced, while at Jagaddal, to read and write Bengali at the rather early age of five and was regarded by his tutor as a precocious boy. In 1842, at the age of ten, he joined the Balasore School where he had his first lessons in English and Oriya. The promoter of the school was Mr. A. Bond, Master Attendant, while Babu Devi Krishna Manna was the Head Master. In 1844 he visited the temple of Jagannath at Puri. He writes: "On the way I was told that there was no shadow of the temple of Jagannath; I disbelieved the information, and while at the shrine itself I demonstrated the folly of my informant's belief." In 1844-45 he was in the Chinsura Preparatory School and subsequently in the Hooghly Collegiate School.

R. D. H. had his first experience in the field of religion at the age of thirteen when his own family priest Umacharan Bhattacharji and his neighbour and kinsman Krishna Mohan Mallik, both ardent Tāntrik Sāktas, initiated him into the mysteries of Kali-worship. Referring

to this incident R. D. H. wrote at a later period : "They succeeded in introducing into my mind a delusion that Mother Kali had favoured me. I sat in the darkest nights on the bank of the Bhagirathi with uplifted arms for hours repeating the name of Kali." He records in his Diary under October 28, 1846 :— "While sitting to-day at a spice-vendor's shop at Bara-bazar I happened to chew a cardamom, and remembering that the shop touched, however indirectly, the English quarters of the town my hair stood on end and I immediately washed my mouth.' Towards the end of the same year he writes : "The phantasm of Kali still continuing, though I had begun to have moments of doubt. The imaginary Kali used to say, 'O Rakhal ! when thou wilt grow up, thy thought will be that Kali is a mere phantasm.' I used to say, 'No ! O mother, no' " The words of the Deity came true for we find that in April 1847 Lalitmohan Goswami of Khardah initiated R. D. H. into Vaishnavism after a slight resistance from him, as he says. The mystic formula of initiation was : "*Om ! kṛiṅg Kṛishṇāya Gopijana-ballabhāya svāhā.*" In 1848 at the age of sixteen R. D. H. married Kiran-kumari the eldest daughter of Kenaram Roy, a Srotريا Brahman of Chandi-pur, a small village in Thana Rayna, in Burdwan.



The bride was only five years of age. In the same year his first contribution in Bengali verse appeared in the *Sādhuranjan*, a weekly newspaper conducted by the well-known Iswar-chandra Gupta. About three months after his marriage he took it into his head to become an itinerant preacher of the sacred Vaidik religion. He writes: "Left home at Kidderpore, came to Jagaddal, took a few rupees from Padmalochan Mallik under a false pretence, walked to Tribeni Ghat, thence to Mogra, where I got vexed because nobody took notice of me; thence to Chitermayer Pukur, where a fool of a shop-keeper entertained me to breakfast because I falsely told him that I was an inhabitant of Baidyabati where he had married. I however very narrowly escaped being detected. The hospitalities of my friend the shop-keeper being over I bade him good-bye, went to Pandua and thence to Simlagarh, where being much jaded I halted for the night. On this day I had taken the longest walk in my life. I had books with me, my only load. The next morning, very early, I happened to meet Madhab Chandra Bannerji on the way at Bainchi, and he induced me to go to his house at Chot-khanda. The people of the whole village having dissuaded me from turning a traveller at my age I was very much affected and I

abandoned the resolution, and returned to Kidderpore."

In 1848-49 he contributed to the *Prabhākar*, *Purnachandrodaya* and *Sādhuranjan* and was in frequent communication with Iswar Chandra Gupta. He states that his religious opinions had at this time become rather unsettled. He wrote an essay in Bengali on psuedo-Christianity. That, he says, was the rage at the time under the golden government of the Hon'ble John Company. It was written in defence of the Hindu religion. In February 1850 he took steps to start a Bengali monthly magazine styled the *Durabikshanikā* or the Telescope in association with his friends Dwarka Nath Mazumdar, Ananga-mohan Mitra and Uday Chandra Deb. The prospectus included the names of Ramcharan Vidyālankār and Mohesh Chandra Tarkachurāmani who were really unconnected with the project but who lent their names in order to add weight to the infant production. The first number was published under the editorship of R. D. H. in April. In May 1850 he wrote: "The projectors of the *Durabikshanikā* got a foretaste of the Courts. I returned home the other day from an evening walk and learnt that the Magistrate of the 24 Parganas had issued a warrant of arrest against me as connected with the magazine. How

the d—l the matter got wind ! I went immediately to Ananga-mohan, at whose house I met Udai and Dwari also, the trio solemnly deliberating as to what was to be done, having been already, like me, served with notices to appear at the Magistrate's Court. I proposed we should forthwith proceed to the house of the Nazir Saheb. All agreed, and we soon proceeded to the Nazir's house in the evening, and found him reclining on a cot placed in the open air, after a hard day's work. We said who we were and what our mission was. What had we done that the Magistrate Elliot Saheb should summon us ? Were we guilty of treason ? We said we would attend the Magistrate's Court the day after. A voice from a room close by said, 'Let them be kept here to-night'. There was a thrill of horror within me. But the Nazir's good sense prevailed, and he took our word of honour and hoped we would attend the Court at 10 o'clock precisely the following day. The day following came after a restless night, and early in the morning we were inquiring at Bhowanipur whether Babu Sambhu Nath Pandit, the Sadar Dewani pleader, had got up. The Babu saw us, evidently surprised what could be the object of our visit so early. We related the circumstances as far as we knew or understood them. Without

making any settlement about fees, Babu Sambhu Nath kindly took out a quarto volume from the book-self and showed us Act XI of 1835, in which it was stated that anybody printing any books or newspapers etc., without permission of the Magistrate, was liable to two years' imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 5,000. Reading this (our first peep into a law-book) we necessarily changed colour; but Babu Sambhu Nath kindly gave us hopes of escape from punishment. We returned home in a sorrowful mood, making various sorts of determinations. Five thousand rupees ! Figs ! Where are we to get the amount ? Two years' imprisonment was preferable. But are they going to allow us books in the prison cell ? Hope they may. Books, papers, pen and ink. All right. We shall live, then, to some purpose. Many glorious examples had preceded us in Europe. Let us then have two years' imprisonment, with the conditions attached. The gong was striking ten as our *gharry* entered the Katcheri compound at Alipore. Those rogues, the Mukhtars, surrounded us, and enquired what the matter was with us, whether we wanted their assistance. We declined their offers with thanks. At 1 P. M. Elliot Saheb's *gharry* came, and after about half an hour names were called out. We were placed in the dock before the Magistrate, and there was a rush of people into

the Court. Mr. Elliot seemed evidently touched by our youth, and after a few words of rebuke in Hindi, ordered us to sign an engagement and find bail. All this was done and we were discharged. Thus ended our first experience in Court.

"The project of the *Durabikshaniká* does not appear likely to succeed, and we are resolved to abandon it."

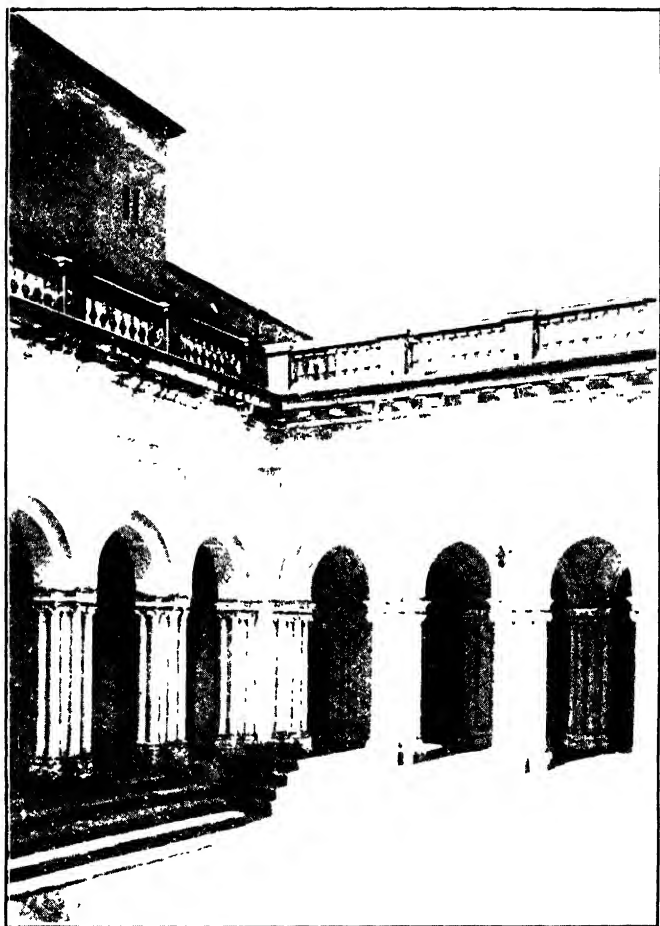
## CHAPTER IV

### THE BRAHMO SAMAJ.

While still in his teens R. D. H. came under the influence of Babu Debendra-nath Tagore who held aloft the torch of Monotheism which was lighted in Bengal by the great Raja Rammohan Roy. In July 1852 he established a branch of the Brahmo Samaj at Jagaddal. Becharam showed great forbearance in permitting one of the rooms of his house to be used for the purpose of the Samaj. About three months later R. D. H. formally signed the Brahmo covenant. Shortly after this, early in October 1852, at the suggestion of Babu Ananga-mohan Mitra and himself the Atmiya Sabha or Friendly Association was established in the house of Babu Debendra-nath. Meetings of the Sabha were held every Wednesday evening. He writes under October 31, 1852: "Babu Debendra-nath Tagore of Calcutta delivered an extempore sermon at the Jagaddal Brahmo Samaj which was established at our house on the 2nd July last. Father is evidently in doubts as to the truth of the 'faith once delivered to the saints.'" R. D. H. was one of the small band of religious reformers who followed the lead of Babu Debendra-nath who, for his part, rendered every

possible help to his faithful followers in all kinds of propaganda work. Babu Debendra-nath paid several visits to the Jagaddal Brahmo Samaj. In later years the venerable Maharshi used to relate to the present writer an incident which occurred during one of his visits. Those were the days of frequent dacoities or gang-robberies in Bengal and the house of Becharam which presented rather an imposing appearance on the left bank of the great Bhagirathi could not fail to tempt these dangerous law-breakers. There had been a dacoity in the house a short time before the arrival, without previous announcement, of Babu Debendra-nath Tagore. The eminent visitor and his retinue presented themselves at the main doorway of the house at about mid-night. They knocked and knocked and shouted themselves hoarse before the door was opened to them, as the inmates took the nocturnal visitors for a band of robbers.

It appears that as far back as 1851 a feeling of depression had overcome many of the ardent members of the Brahmo Samaj; and ways and means were seriously discussed in order to place the Samaj on a stable footing. R. D. H. tells us of a visit he paid to Babu Debendra-nath Tagore in June 1851. He was accompanied by his friend Babu Ananga-mohan Mitra, a gentleman about whom Babu Debendra-nath held a very high op-



JAGADDAL HOUSE. A CORNER  
OF OUTER QUADRANGLE.





inion. Let us quote from his Diary :—" We said, hitherto the progress of Bráhmadharma was only nominal, that we should try to reduce to practice what we so often preach. Babu Debendra-nath said we should certainly try to do so, but the time had not arrived for the consummation of all our wishes. When Bráhmadharma was first established, the people were extremely hostile towards it. Scarcely half a dozen attended the Brahmo Samaj. We have gained something by our constant efforts in the fact that many people now come to the Samaj to hear the sermons. In social matters, we might rectify and improve things were we to separate ourselves from the bulk of the Hindus as a separate sect. Babu Debendra said, for the present it would be sufficient if the Brahmos would follow the simple rules laid down in the Bráhmadharma-grantha. When more rules are needed, more might be added. Those who would voluntarily follow the rules of the Bráhmadharma, ought to join the new sect."

In January 1854 R. D. H. took the bold step of casting off the Brahmanical thread. The incident is thus referred to by Maharshi Debendra-nath Tagore in his "Autobiography":—"When Rakhal Das Haldar's father heard of his son's proposal to renounce the sacred thread, he immediately tried to stab himself in the heart with

a knife." \* The Maharshi was apparently misinformed as to the precise facts, and he has unwittingly done an injustice to the memory of poor Becharam Haldar. The facts are thus stated by R. D. H. in a letter addressed at the time to his Brahmo friends Babus Ananga-mohan Mitra, Mati Lal Mazumdar, Kali Charan Dutt, Prasanna-coomar Sen and Kedar-nath Mazumdar : "Permit me to declare that I am not in the least backward in performing the duties my Religion inculcates. I am still as sincere a Brahmo as ever, since I have embraced the Holy Religion. But in one thing, I humbly confess I have done wrong, and that is by re-taking the Thread. It was impossible for me not to have done so,—it was impracticable to have acted in an obstinate manner when I saw the breast of my old father overflowing with tears,—and when I heard him say that his only hope in his old age was now lost. Such is the bond of nature : yet I am far from denying that there are several wise men who care very little for these things. Although my father is now of a different opinion, yet he had said that I could have done anything according to my will except throwing away the *Paitā*

\* "The Autobiography of Maharshi Debendra-nath Tagore." (Calcutta S. K. Lahiri, 1909.)

and I have publicly declared that if I retake the *Pottā* it would be only to please my father. However, I have retaken and will keep that petty thing for my father's sake." It may be added that the original body of the Brahmo Samaj which owns allegiance to the Maharshi has not discarded the Brahmanical thread although the ceremony of investiture followed by that Samaj has been remodelled on non-idolatrous lines.

In the cold weather of 1853 Babu Debendra-nath Tagore entertained his Brahmo friends and followers at his pleasant garden-house at Palta, a place on the right bank of the Bhagirathi between Baidyabati and Bhadreswar. R. D. H. and some of his Bhowanipur friends proceeded by arrangement to Jagannath Ghat where a fleet of boats awaited the guests. Babu Debendra-nath received the guests at the Ghat and gave them a warm welcome. The boats were fitted up sumptuously and were provided with every comfort for the guests. There were light refreshments, beds and a pack of cards in each boat and there was a servant in attendance. In the first boat there were some ten Brahmos of Krishnagar under the leadership of Babu Akhoy Kumar Dutt. The second boat carried ten Brahmo gentlemen of Bhowanipur and Kidderpore including R. D. H. and was in

charge of Uma Charan Haldar. The third boat carried a few Brahmos from Angulia under the leadership of Baikuntha-nath Dutt. The fourth boat carried a few Calcutta Brahmos under the leadership of Ananda Chandra Vedantabágish. The fifth contained Debendra Babu's nephew, son-in-law and his sons. Babu Debendra-nath Tagore himself went on board the sixth boat. The fleet started on the approach of the flood-tide and proceeded up the river. The guests had a merry time on board. At Baidyabati they had a view of the new railway line. On arrival at the garden-house the guests who numbered about 50 had a pleasant bath and were treated to a hearty breakfast. A temporary mound had been raised under the spreading branches of a mango-tree to serve as a dais. The Upá-charyas seated themselves on the dais and conducted Divine worship. Thereafter Babu Debendra-nath came forward and read a written address. He said that at the request of a few friends he proposed that the Brahmos should henceforth form a separate social unit and go to work accordingly. Babu Akhoy Kumar Dutt and others held that the time for separation had not yet arrived. Babu Uma Charan Dey urged that in a matter of religious duty any postponement should not be thought of. The matter was dis-

cussed for a time and then Babu Debendra-nath said that it would be best for Brahmos to give the matter some further consideration and he asked them to decide the point after four or five days. Silence prevailed for a time in the assembly and then R. D. H. said that the proposal was not new so that it was not necessary to take time to think over it. He then formally proposed that the Brahmos should cut themselves off from the idolatrous Hindus. On being put to the vote the proposal found only eight supporters. The meeting then dissolved. The idea of separation from the Hindu society was thus abandoned, so far as the Samaj of Babu Debendra-nath Tagore was concerned.

The share taken by R. D. H. in the Brahmo propaganda will appear from the following entry in his Diary, under February 21, 1852 : "For some weeks past I have been trying, along with my friend Taraknath Rai, Head Master, Telinipara Preparatory School, to introduce the Bráhma-dharma into that school. On 15th instant I sent an essay in English, written by me on this subject, with a letter to Jagat Bandhu Bannerji, ostensible proprietor of the school, urging the necessity of introducing Brahmo books into the classes. I had several interviews with Babu Annada-prasad Bannerji, zamindar and patron of the school. Babu Annada-prasad approved of my suggestion,

and Ram-chandra Vidyábágis's 'Seventeen Discourses' was adopted as a class-book. I agreed to give weekly lectures to the advanced students, and delivered to-day the first lecture on Bráhma-dharma. The lecture was well received."

## CHAPTER V

### MAINLY ABOUT LITERARY WORK.

After the failure of his journalistic venture R. D. H. was engaged in association with Tarak-nath Roy in writing a philosophical work in Bengali on the basis of Bacon and Dugald Stewart,—a work which was never completed. He also contributed various articles to the ‘Purnachandrodaya.’ In November 1852 he completed his translation of six of Lamb’s Tales from Shakespeare, *viz.*, Othello, Pericles, Cymbeline, As You Like It, King Lear and Romeo and Juliet. The work was done for Udyachand Adhya and Adwaita-chandra Adhya, the proprietors of the Purnachandrodaya Press, who gave him the paltry sum of Rs. 18 for the copy-right. In the previous year he was engaged as a clerk in his father’s office and in the autumn of that year he was in frequent communication with Siva-sankar Giri, an enlightened Vedantic Pandit. The following extract from his Diary under March 21, 1853, throws some light on the early history of the Brahmo Samaj :—“ Attended meeting of the Gyánprakásiká Sabha at Bhawanipore ; Babu Debendra-nath Tagore and several Brahmos of Calcutta attended. After the service, the draft Trust-deed was read, Babu Debendra being chair-



man. I moved that the name Gyánprakásiká might be changed into the Bhawanipore Brahmo Samaj. Several speakers, residents of Bhawanipore, vociferated 'No ! No !'. Among the persons present were Babus Sambhunath Pandit, Kasiswar Mittra, Prasanna Kumar Mukharji, Harischandra Mukharji and others, altogether about 150 people. Babu Debendra finding there was an overwhelming majority of the residents of Bhawanipore, whispered into my ear, enquiring whether the meeting was announced in the public newspapers in the regular way. The object of the enquiry was that if the meeting had not been properly announced, another meeting must be called, and in the interim several members of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj might be introduced as members, and so the number of members advocating the name Brahmo Samaj might nearly equal the Bhawanipore members. I said, before I moved for the adjournment of the meeting, I should like to make a little speech. I was a regular member of the Society, and harangued for about a quarter of an hour, and told the gentlemen present that not to acknowledge the name of Brahmo Samaj, which the Society actually was, would betray moral cowardice. The meeting was then divided, members counted, there was a show of hands, and it was found that the advocates of

the different designations were equally divided. The chairman having a casting vote, we the advocates for the name of Brahmo Samaj, carried the day, and that name was introduced in the Trust-deed.

On July 29, 1853, R. D. H. attended a monster meeting of Indians held at the Town Hall. Raja Radhakanta Dev was in the chair. R. D. H. records that an extremely effective and eloquent extempore speech was delivered by Babu Ramgopal Ghosh—one of the great pioneers of political progress in the last century.

In March 1855 R. D. H. wrote an essay in defence of widow-marriage, in reply to a pamphlet written by Babu Prasanna Kumar Mukharji who defended the existing prohibition from the orthodox point of view. The following entry in his Diary under Sep. 26, 1855, is interesting : “Made the acquaintance of the American Unitarian Missionary, Mr. C. H. A. Dall, who has arrived recently at Calcutta for spreading Unitarian Christianity. Conversed with him for an hour at Mountain’s Hotel. Thence went to the Tattwabodhini Society, where chatted for a while with Akshay Kumar Dutt. Passed on to the Sanskrit College and met Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The second part of his book on widow remarriage is now in an advanced stage of preparation ; Vidyasa-

gar said he would embody my reply to Prasanna Kumar Mukharji's pamphlet in his book". In the same month he was on a visit to his friend Babu Ananga Mohan Mitra and he heard a rather interesting anecdote concerning Vidyáságar. It was said that Vidyáságar had been recently invited to Uttarpara by Babu Joykrishna Mookerjee. Many people were waiting to receive him. It was discovered after some time that the great Vidyáságar had been present in company for some hours without being noticed.

On February 17, 1853, R. D. H. with the help of his friend Ananga Mohan Mitra established the Kidderpore Brahmo Samaj. The East Indian Railway was opened for public traffic in 1854. R. D. H. writes under August 15 of that year : "I came from Howrah to Chandernagore in one hour." It does not appear that the speed of our railway trains has been accelerated to any great extent during the last 65 years. Mr. Sambhoo Chander Dey in his "Hooghly, Past and Present" (Calcutta M. M. Dey and Co., 1906) mentions August 19, 1854 as the date on which the E. I. Railway was opened up to Hooghly.

In 1854 when he was living at Kidderpore R. D. H. published his "Srirámcharit" in Bengali. It was printed at the Sudhárnab Press and was published from the library of the Tattwabodhini

Sabha. The pamphlet was dedicated to his friend Babu Ananga Mohan Mitra. It was reprinted by the present writer with the help of his esteemed friend Principal Ràmendra Sundar Trivedi in 1901. Principal Trivedi in a prefatory note to the second edition describes the work as being an excellent example of the chaste classical Bengali in vogue in the middle of the nineteenth century. The author wrote : "I have derived but little benefit by the publication of this book. It is not that the book has been badly written ; for many books written in a much inferior style have found numerous buyers. The real reason why my book has found little favour with the people is this—most people in this country are idolaters. They have been displeased at my description of Ràmchandra as a mere human being ; and those who know English do not care to read books written in Bengali."

In 1855 he wrote a Bengali translation of Rammohan Roy's "Precepts of Jesus." The book was published by the Rev. C. H. A. Dall, the American Unitarian Missionary. In a lecture on Rammohan Roy delivered in Calcutta on November 19, 1871, Mr. Dall said : "For fifteen years I have been a careful student, not only of the published works of Rammohan Roy, but of the Brahmo Samaj movement in all parts of India.

My first course of lectures on Rammohan's chief work, 'The Precepts of Jesus', which I should call the Life and Teachings of Jesus, was given in 1855 to the Brahmo Samaj of Kidderpore, then in charge of Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, whom afterwards I took to London, and who has since done honour to himself and to his country, and to the genuine teachings of the native founder in Calcutta of a church or *samaj* expressly in the words of the founder 'to strengthen the bond of union between men of *all* religious persuasions and creeds.' "

Pundit Mahendra Nath Vidyanidhi says in his Life of Akshay Kumar Dutt (in Bengali) that a portion of the religious service in the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj \* had for a long time been conducted in the Sanskrit language. It was very much like the repetition of Sanskrit *mantras* by persons unacquainted with the Sanskrit language. Babu Akshay Kumar always thought that a far more useful purpose would be served

\* Babu Keshub Chander Sen separated himself from his old leader Babu Debendra Nath Tagore in November 1866 and set up the "Bharatbarshiya Brahmo Samaj" or the Brahmo Samaj of India. The designation of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj was thereupon changed to the Adi Brahmo Samaj which continued under the leadership of Babu Debendra Nath.

if the service were conducted in Bengali which could be understood by the whole congregation. Pundit Mahendra-nath says that owing to the opposition of Babu Debendranath and others no alteration was made in this respect in the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj; but when Babu Rakhal Das Haldar and others proceeded to establish a separate Brahmo Samaj at Kidderpore, Akshay Babu heartily accepted a similar proposal which emanated from those progressive founders. The religious service in the Kidderpore Brahmo Samaj was conducted entirely in Bengali and Babu Akshay-kumar afforded great encouragement to the members by paying frequent visits to the new Samaj. Later on this system was cheerfully adopted by the Bháratbarshiya Brahmo Samaj and the Sádháran Brahmo Samaj. Earlier in the nineteenth century, in the days of Rajah Ram-mohan Roy, the *élite* of the community looked down upon the Bengali language as unclassical and unrefined. The Bengali members of the Unitarian Committee, which preceded the Brahmo Sabha, stoutly opposed a proposal which was made by Mr. William Adam to hold religious service in Bengali. They contended that "anything said or written in the vernacular tongue will be degraded and despised in consequence of the medium through which it is conveyed."

English, Persian and Sanskrit were the only languages which would command respect. \*

In December 1855 R. D. H wrote a long letter to Babu Debendra-nath Tagore on the decadent condition of the Brahmo Samaj pointing out the causes which in his opinion had brought about that result. The letter was published in the *Indian Mirror* in its issues of September 20 and October 16, 1914, under "Motley Notes." Here are some extracts : "To the question,—what kind of men the present Brahmos are?—my reply is that with a few exceptions they are not generally such as they should be. Indeed, this is the case with all men in the world ; but as the pretensions of the Brahmos are somewhat higher than those of the ordinary run of mankind they are under the obligation to practise more virtue, to be more religious than common men are .... Generally, the Brahmos are neither better nor worse than ordinary superstitious men. The same inclination to petty vices, the same fondness for bad company may be observable in both. Why are the Brahmos (with a few exceptions) not better men ? Because they are taught, or at least they think they are taught, only

\* Mr. W. Adam to Mr. W. J. Fox, Sept. 10, 1827. See "The Life and Letters of Raja Rommohan Roy" by Miss S. D Collet (London : Harold Collet, 1900).

to disbelieve what the mass of the Hindus believe to be true. There they rest, and advance no more. How could then we expect them to be men of morals? To appear well in the eyes of the world is their sole aim. They care very little for the well-being of the internal man. Some time ago the idolaters had said that it was to eat and drink and dress well, but not for the sake of religion that men were following Rammohan Roy. . . . . In almost ninety-nine cases out of a hundred we see that people understand Brahmoism to be merely non-idolism. Their moral affections are neglected while their understanding is addressed. They receive religious instruction in a negative manner. It is for this reason they do not become religious men. The truth is we have no good religious teachers. It cannot be doubted that such men are essentially necessary for success in the propagation of religion. What is the case with Christianity? Much of its success is to be attributed to the preaching of good and learned men. . . . ."

R. D. H. records in his Diary under April 15, 1855: "Two friends, just returned from Burdwan, said they could not find out the Burdwan Brahmo Samaj. They were told that the Samaj was only opened when some big wig would visit the town."

It may be stated here that Becharam Halder's



notions about culture did not rise much higher than those which generally prevailed around him. He wanted his son to familiarise himself with the three R's and—that was the main thing—to acquire a good calligraphy, so as to qualify himself for a clerkship in a Calcutta office. But the ambition of his son soared higher. At the age of twenty-four he had read either wholly or in part the opinions and writings of religious reformers like Goutama, Jesus Christ, Chaitanya, Nanak, Babalal, Ram Mohan Roy, Siva-narayan, Kabir, Dadoo, Sankaráchárya and Mahammad, and of religious writers like Theodore Parker (Theism etc.), and Francis Newman (The Soul), of thinkers like Rousseau (Reply to the Mandate etc.), Thomas Paine (Age of Reason), Voltaire (Philosophical Dictionary), Dennys (Alpha), Dick (The Philosophy of Religion), Brown (Natural Theology), Volney (Ruins), Hume (Natural Religion), Channing, etc. He notes that, “they all *disagree* with each other in error; but *agree* in truth. This is the way with all ‘Thinkers’ in the world.”

In his Bengali Note Book R. D. H. records (1856) his thoughts and opinions on various subjects as they occurred to him from time to time. One of the subjects touched upon by him concerns the improvement of the Bengali language. He notes with regret that those of his coun-

trymen who had taken to the study of the English language and had acquired a knowledge of that language were disposed to neglect the claims of their own vernacular. He thereafter proceeds to discuss somewhat minutely the relative merits of the classical Sanskrit model as against a colloquial style of composition. He plumps unhesitatingly for the latter. At the same time he dilates upon the extreme desirability of adding to the rather exiguous Bengali vocabulary by judicious adaptation from the English language, just as that language had so marvellously enriched itself from many different foreign sources. It was not till some twenty-five years later that Rabindra Nath Tagore, as a budding genius, revolutionised Bengali literature by introducing an easy conversational style both in prose and verse.

## CHAPTER VI

### UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY

Speaking of trade, in reply to a letter from his uncle Babu Kailash Nath Chakravarty who was then residing at Benares, R. D. H. said (in November 1855) that trading was not in his line and that his own bent was distinctly literary. He refers in this letter to Vidyasagar's epoch-making book on Widow-marriage. In May 1856 at the request of the Rev. Mr. Dall he put down in writing his views regarding the Christian miracles. He said that he had the same reasons for disbelieving those miracles that the Christians had for discrediting the miracles related in the Hindu and Mahommedan scriptures. He wrote in an apologetic tone, so as to avoid giving offence to the reverend gentleman. He quoted in support his religious master Ram Mohan Roy, who said: "The Hebrew language in common with other Asiatic tongues frequently indulges in metaphor and consequently the Old Testament written in that language abounds with expressions which cannot be taken in their literal sense." He further quoted from the same great authority:—"It is fortunate for Moosulmans that from want of familiarity and intimate connexion between the primitive Mahommedans and their

contemporary heathens, the doctrines of Monotheism taught by Mahammad and entertained by his followers have not been corrupted by polytheistical notions of pagans, nor have heathen modes of worship or festivals been introduced among Moosulmans of Arabia and Turkey as a part of their religion. Besides, metaphorical expressions having been very common among Oriental nations, Mahommedans could not fail to understand them in their proper sense, although these expressions may throw great difficulty in the way of a European commentator, even of profound learning." In a letter written from Taltola Lane, Calcutta, in June 1856 he informed his cousin Jwala-prasad Halidar of Ludhiana that he had been promoted to the rank of Head Clerk in the 24-Parganas Embankment office where he had been working for the preceding five years. In this letter he reports the serious illness of his brother Gagan who had been brought down by his father to Calcutta, where he was "under the treatment of a skilful physician, Babu Durga Charan Banerjee." There is a curious reference in the same letter to an important political event, the annexation of Oudh: "His Majesty Wajid Ali Shah is now residing with us Bengalis. His intentions cannot be easily fathomed. Does he intend to repair, for the recovery of his kingdom,

to England, the nursery of refined vices? It would be quite foolish. Is there any difference of opinion between Dalhousie and the Court of Directors on the subject? The British Government were contemplating for a long time the annexation of Oudh, before, I believe, the appointment of Lord Dalhousie to the Government of India had been dreamed of." He writes in the same letter: "I understand that the Hindu Widow Re-marriage Bill has been passed. I am not aware of your opinions on the subject. But for my part, I cannot but consider that the permissive Act is a great boon to the Hindu community." In this matter he actively co-operated, in his own humble way, with the great Vidyasagar. On February 22, 1857, he witnessed at Pataldanga the marriage of a brother of Babu Rajnarain Bose with a widow. In April 1865 he recorded the marriage of Trailokya Nath Mukerjee with his widowed sister-in-law Mokshada Debi. Becharam Halder, as an orthodox Hindu, showed great magnanimity by giving his sanction to this domestic event. The ceremony was performed with the help of Bengal's greatest social reformer, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar who, in a letter written in Bengali to R. D. H., said: "Up to now I have assisted at many widow marriages, but for various reasons the remarriage of Moksha-

da has afforded me such exquisite joy as I have never before experienced. May the newly-wedded couple enjoy a life of unalloyed happiness! I go and see them almost every day. I have grown attached to Mokshada as to a daughter."

About this time R. D. H. came into close contact with Mr. Dall, the American Unitarian Missionary. Writing from No. 77 Taltola Lane (which locality he describes on another occasion as "the head-quarters of Khalasis") in June 1856 to his relative Babu Bhupati Ghosal \* who was then at Nainital, he refers to Mr. Dall's high character and tries to interest his friend in Unitarian Christianity. He frequently corresponded with Mr. Dall, often saw that gentleman at Mountain's Hotel, at the south-west corner of Wellington Square, and helped him in his Unitarian propaganda. His own ideas about religion were thus expressed in a letter (July 1856) to Babu Bhupati Ghosal : "I believe that as there is one God so there is but one religion. Vedaism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Mahammadanism and even Paganism are the various forms of it. In other words the essence of all the existing and would-be religions in the world is the True Reli-

\* This gentleman rose to the position of a Subordinate Judge in the N. W. Provinces and after retiring from service lived for many years in Calcutta.

gion—Deism, Theism, or Brahmaism.” Speaking of the religion of Jesus Christ in the same letter he says that it appears to him better adapted to the good of men than any other existing religious system. In expressing this view he appears to follow his religious *Guru*, Ram Mohan Roy, whom he cites in a controversial letter addressed to the *Englishman* (September 30, 1856). Ram Mohan had thus expressed himself: “The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational beings than any others which have come to my knowledge.” Writing to Theodore Parker in July 1856 he said: “I think I can almost without any reserve agree with your religious sentiments as laid down in the work on ‘Theism, Atheism and Popular Theology’.” He expressed himself more fully regarding Christianity in a letter written in the following month to Mr. Edward N. Denny of London, whose personal acquaintance he made five or six years later in England: “I cordially agree with your opinions regarding Christianity.....Christianity is now gradually laying aside the old garb given her by superstition, and appearing to the world in her genuine lustre. Theodore Parker has taken it

upon himself to enlighten America, while in Great Britain, Francis Newman and yourself are busy in working a salutary change in theology. These are happy signs indeed." R. D. H. has noted: "So far back as the year 1820 our celebrated countryman, whom I shall call Rammohan Roy the Eclectic, had taken a Unitarian view of Christianity; and conjointly with the Rev. William Adam he had established a Unitarian Society." Alluding to the proposal regarding the establishment of an association styled the "Rammohan Roy Society" he writes to Babu Bhupati Ghosal in August 1856: "Raja Rammohan Roy was emphatically an 'eclectic' His followers must be so too. I am very far from insinuating that he was infallible. We are to follow him so far as he was an expounder of truth. We must acknowledge truths where-ever they are found. We must propagate the truths, believing them such, in the world at large. We must never lose sight of the grand motto of Rammohan Roy that "THE TRUE WAY OF SERVING GOD IS TO DO GOOD TO MAN." In the same letter R. D. H. alludes to the fact that Babus Ramá Prasad Roy and Prasanna Coomar Tagore had declared their intention of defraying the expenses of a complete edition of the Rajah's works. "Let us await the result," he adds. Writing later in the year to the same gentleman he says



that as Babu Ramá Prasad does not appear to be prompt enough to republish his father's works it would be for the Rammohan Roy Society to undertake the business. In this letter he alludes to a discussion which was then going on in the columns of the *Englishman* and the *Harkaru* regarding Rammohan Roy and the Rammohan Roy Society. In September 1856 R. D. H. wrote a letter to the *Englishman*\* in defence of Mr. Dall who had been attacked by the *Morning Chronicle*. In a letter written in November 1856 to Babu Chandra Sekhar Dev—Rammohan Roy's friend—who was then at Burdwan, he mentions the fact that the immediate object of the Rammohan Roy Society, which was to be shortly established, was to republish the Rajah's works. He asks Babu Chandra Sekhar whether the Rajah was the real author of *Pauttalik Prabodh* (a Bengali tract against idolatry) which appeared in the name of Brajamohan Dev, of the letters addressed to Dr. Tytler on "Incarnation of the Deity as the common basis of Hindooism and Christianity", which were signed Ram Doss, of the "Abstract of the Arguments regarding the Burning of Widows considered as a religious rite" which appeared in 1830, and of the four numbers of the

\**The Englishman* was then in the Editorial charge of Mr. William Cobb Hurry.

*Brahminical Magazine* which came out in the name of the Rajah's Pandit, Shiva-prasad Sarma. It is now known that these were really written by the Rajah himself. R. D. H. also inquired if Babu Chandra Sekhar was the author of the "Answer of a Hindu to the question 'Why do you frequent a Unitarian place of worship?'" which bore his signature. Its real author was the Rajah. The project of republishing the works of Rajah Rammohan Roy did not materialize, and it was not until 30 years later that our enterprising townsman Babu (now Rai Bahadur) Jogendra Chunder Ghose, M. A., B. L. collected and republished the English works of the Rajah for the first time.

The following is an extract from a letter dated Boston, October 6, 1856, written by Theodore Parker to R. D. H: "In America I stood long well nigh alone—at least no preachers shared my doctrines; or if they believed, none published such doctrines. I differ from all the Christian and un-Christian sects in this—I teach the infinite perfection of God—that he is infinite in Power, Wisdom, Justice, Benevolence and Holiness (Faithfulness to himself). I derive this idea of God not at all from what is called 'Miraculous revelations', but wholly from the spontaneous intuitions and reflective thoughts of man.



Of course therefore all the sects reject me, often with great scorn." In December 1856 R. D. H. wrote to Mr. Theodore Parker: "As yet we have very few thoughtful books written by my countrymen. At present I can mention the name of one only by Rammohan Roy. It is written in the Persian language and entitled 'Tohftool Mohdeen' or 'A Present to the Theists,' and is said to be an admirable book. An English translation of it is expected to be prepared and printed ere long." At this time an association called the Hitaishini Sabha or the Philanthropic Society which was presided over by Babu Kanai-lal Pain was the centre of some Theistic activity in Calcutta.

The religious attitude of Theodore Parker as expressed in the following extract from his letter appears to have strongly appealed to R. D. H.: "I do not believe in the miraculous origin of the Hebrew Church or the Buddhist Church or the Christian Church; nor the miraculous character of Jesus. I take not the Bible for my master, nor yet the Church, nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. I feel not at all bound to believe what the Church says is true, nor what any writer in the Old or New Testament declares to be true; and I am ready to believe that Jesus taught, as I think, eternal

torment, the existence of a devil, and that he himself should ere long come back in the clouds of heaven. I do not accept these things on his authority. I try all things by the human faculties ; intellectual things by the intellect, moral things by the conscience, affectional things by the affections and religious things by the soul. Has God given us anything better than our nature ? How can we serve Him and his purposes but by its normal use ?”

## CHAPTER VII.

### EDUCATIONAL WORK IN CUTTACK

At the close of the year 1856 the activities of R. D. H. in connection with the Theistic movement appear to have received a check. He seems at the same time to have taken an altogether gloomy view of his country's general prospects as will appear from a letter addressed to Mr. Edward N. Dennys in February 1857 : "As an Englishman, you can reasonably hope for a better day to arrive within a century or two. But how different is the scene that I behold around me ! How heart rending it is ! Millions of my countrymen are still to be seen lying prostrate before Idols. It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of years must pass before my *fallen* countrymen can take a right view of their social and moral condition. You will get an idea of the slowness of social improvements in this country from the fact that nearly 30 years have intervened between the abolition of the burning of Hindu widows and the legalisation of their re-marriage. Compared to the sons of ignorance, the number of the educated is insignificant—one to a hundred thousand. But our consolation is that a part of this small number of persons are so raised in the scale of humanity as to commune with the souls of John Fichte, Francis Newman, Theodore

Parker, Ralph Emerson and Edward Dennys. It is a good sign after all."

A personal event which deeply affected R. D. H. in the beginning of 1857 was the conversion of his dear friend Babu Ananga-mohan Mittra to Christianity. He had been long associated with that gentleman in his search after religious truth. Six years previously he had written : "I am in communistic friendship with Ananga-mohan Mittra." His friend appears to have been strongly influenced by the Theistic teachings of Ram-mohan Roy. It was an easy transition from those teachings to Unitarianism ; but that he should drift to Trinitarian Christianity and be baptised by the London Missionary Society came as a complete surprise to his most intimate friends. How R. D. H. was upset by the event may be gathered from a letter he wrote on April 2, 1857, to Babu Ananga-mohan : "As regards your question, whether I have courage enough to breakfast with you publicly I beg to say that that is out of the question. Attribute my seeming inconsistency to whatever motive you may, to me it is a sufficient consolation to feel that 'the principle of no caste' is not essential to salvation. I am far from advocating the system of caste. I wish it had ceased to exist with the fools who had invented it. But as long as I cannot lose caste without giving offence to

those who are dearest to me I shall remain within the pale of Hinduism." In September, 1856, R.D.H. attended the Unitarian Church in Calcutta and witnessed the baptism of two or three children by Mr. Dall. He returned home accompanied by Babus Ananga-mohan Mittra and Haranath Tagore. He writes: "Haranath informed me that the rumour of my and Babu Ananga-mohan's being converted to Christianity is gradually gaining ground. The informant asked, whether we had really thrown off Brahminism and come to believe in the miracles, prophecies, hobgoblins and devils of the Bible. He got, however, a satisfactory reply from us." Strange to say that the forecast came true in the case of his friend. If one may compare small things with great, reference may here be made to the conversion of Madhusudan Dutt, the Bengali Milton—an event which convulsed Bengal in the early part of 1843. Madhusudan's conversion was a surprise and a shock to those who were near and dear to him. He had not been brought up under Missionary influences. On the contrary, as a student of the Hindu College he came in touch with David Hare and D. L. Richardson, both of them advanced thinkers who were at one with Keats in regarding Christianity as a creed which was slowly "dying like an outburnt lamp." The

seamy side of popular Hinduism could not fail to distress Madhusudan and at the same time the glamour of western civilisation made him long for "the light that leads the blind to Heaven." He came to regard Christianity as a civilising agency—a delusion to which many a young man of his time was a victim. But he confessed at a later date that his real feeling was Hindu. It is well known that it was mainly through the tender passion that Madhusudan was led to embrace the religion of his inamorata.

As may be expected there are references in the papers of R. D. H. to the great Sepoy Mutiny. Writing on May 23, 1857, to Babu Bhupati Ghosal at Nani Tal, he said : "Calcutta is now apparently big with a storm of political revolution. Wide-spread conspiracies are known to exist. Old rusty guns are brought out from magazines, and scoured and polished. Musty powder basking in the sunshine; and in fact vendors of guns making fortunes. Revolvers are generally used. Every third Christian (male) is or must be a military man. Native sepoys are being replaced by European soldiers in the Fort, Jail and other important places. Gates of the Fort are closed at night. Weapons of offence are withdrawn from the Durwans in the houses of gentlemen foreigners. Consultations are being held among the



Masonic Brethren. To complete the description, the Governor-General is now and then hiding himself within the Fort. Such is the *oui-dire* here now. But I say, India is neither France nor England. Physical must yield before moral force. Do you ask my own opinion as to the British Government? Without sacrificing patriotism I wish its continuance. A millennium must pass away before the natives of this country can be competent to hold the reins of their own Government." Writing from Kidderpore in August of the same year to Babu Umesh Chunder Sen,\* who was at Bhagalpur, he says: "The various rumours of the rebellion now appear to me at last as old tales. The danger may be great, but the hand of Providence is greater still. India is not to be annihilated; nor can it go so easily from the iron grasp of the British nation. The British are morally greater than the Hindus and Mussulmans."

In July 1857 R. D. H. was appointed Deputy Inspector of Schools in Cuttack. It appears that he was helped in this matter by Dr. E. Roer, Inspector of Schools, South West Bengal. In a letter dated Bose's Garden, Chuckerber, July

\* This gentleman belonged to the Kayastha Sen family of Jagaddal. He was afterwards Head Master of the Ranchi Government School.

16, 1857 to his friend Babu Harokali Mukerjee\* (of Rahuta near Jagaddal) who was then Deputy Inspector of Schools, Rungpore, he says that it was not so much on account of pecuniary advantage that he had sought the appointment as to get rid of the drudgery of the Embankment office. Writing to Mr. Dall from Cuttack in September of the same year he says that he did not find the place so good as he had anticipated from previous reports ; and he adds that he apprehended many difficulties in connection with his work. In the meantime Babu Harokali Mukerjee had been transferred to the neighbouring district of Balasore and he had given his friend a glowing account of that place. In a subsequent letter to his friend he writes : "I regret to say that the account I had given you of the district of Balasore was not wholly accurate. I have lately passed through your district, and my opinion of it (which was formed when I was a boy) has undergone some modifications. At all events, it must be far better than Rungpore. People say that Cuttack is better than Balasore, but I have not yet found it so. My district is overrun by hills and jungles, abounding in carni-

\* Babu Harokali Mukerjee afterwards became a member of the Provincial Civil Service, Executive Branch.

vorous animals. I now possess some experience of the Mofussil. I do not know how the Deputy Inspectors manage their affairs in the interior of their respective districts. The hardships I have borne in my late tour of inspection have been great. I could not find even fuel at treble price, not to mention the extreme scarcity of other necessaries." It appears that R. D. H. was actively engaged in establishing new schools in the district of Cuttack. Subsequently the Inspector of Schools, agreeably to the wishes of Government, imposed limitations on his power in this respect. He had thenceforth to content himself with the establishment of aided schools only. In September 1857 in a demi-official letter to Dr. Roer he wrote : "I am sorry to learn that the present position of the Government does not enable them to carry out those educational measures which are peculiarly necessary for this part of the Bengal Province. Guru-Mahasay circles and Model Schools are perhaps the only systems by means of which any considerable success could be hoped for in Orissa. As the matter stands, we must be content at present with attempting to establish schools on the Grant-in-aid system. I beg, however, respectfully to mention that I cannot cheer myself with the hope of establishing many aided schools. It would be repeating what you already know to say that the

people of this country do not appreciate education. They understand it to be only as a means of securing employment under Government, and when this does not happen, they deem it worse than useless. Their reason is that if a lad had not been detained in a school, he might have become useful in other ways.....Discouraging as these circumstances are, we yet require time to reason with the people, and if I can prevail upon the Zamindars to lend their aid to the cause of humanity something may be expected to be done." In a letter to his friend and co-villager Babu Gopal Chandra Mazumdar written on September 25, 1857 he gave the following account of his journey to Cuttack: "I had left Calcutta on the 12th August, reached Midnapore on the 15th, enjoyed there the company of Babu Rajnarayan Bose and attended the Brahmo Samaj. On the 21st, I found myself at Balasore the scene of my boyhood. O what a pleasant sensation passed through my mind, when at Bastah (a few miles above Balasore) I saw the old Nilgiri majestically towering above the row of trees in the plains. This hill is a favourite of mine from my childhood. When only a boy, I would everyday gaze at it with a mysterious sort of awe mixed with pleasure. You may easily imagine that I was in high spirits at Balasore,

where I remained for two days and a half. You are aware that I arrived at Cuttack on the 13th ultimo. We had to undergo much suffering on the way. The bodily pain suffered by the poor bearers was immense. The road was full of mud ; the wear and tear of hackeries had made it too rugged ; it is also at some places completely swept away by inundation. The population of the country I passed through appeared very scanty. Some villages boast of three or four huts only ! The country in fact is a vast sheet of rice-fields ; the villages are small patches of huts and trees. Not so the district of Cuttack ; it is overrun by hills on the west and jungles on the east. It is nearly similar to the southern portion of the 24-Parganahs, which cannot however boast of hills. Wild buffaloes, tigers, panthers and bears abound in the hills and jungles. The people are more superstitious than the Bengalis. They do not in the least appreciate education." In a letter to Babu Harokali Mukerjee who was at home at Rahuta on his way to join his duties at Balasore R. D. H. refers to Dr. Roer's change of attitude towards himself. It would seem that the Inspector of Schools was not satisfied with the amount of inspection work done by him in the interior of the district and thought he was spending too long a time at headquarters. But this was only

a passing cloud and Dr. Roer appears to have been entirely satisfied with R. D. H's efficiency and devotion to his work. In a letter written to him in Bengali Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar thus expressed his sympathy : "I am sorry to hear of the troubles experienced by you owing to the nature of the work which has been thrown upon you by Government. It is on account of the worries attendant on service that our Shastras have assigned to it the lowest place amongst vocations. No one can count upon comfort and convenience unless he succeeds in worming himself into the favour of the men in power. There is nothing for you but to bear your misfortune in patience for you may take it that you will not have to perform such disagreeable duties for long".

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME OPINIONS OF R. D. H.

A lurid picture of the condition of the country in those days will be found in the following extracts from a letter written at this time by R. D. H. to Dr. Roer: "The best informed authorities warrant me to say that it will be uphill work with us to get the wealthy persons here to establish schools. The Commissioner, the Collector, the Principal Sadar Amin, the Munsiff and the Deputy Collectors agree in thinking that several rich persons will rarely pay together three rupees a month out of pure charity...The truth is that it is beyond the comprehension of the people that a person may be so disinterested as to spend money for the education of his neighbour's children. If the Hindu Shastras ever enjoined such acts of disinterested charity they are no longer performed. You are well aware that the Hindus spend large sums for what they deem religious purposes. I beg to mention as an instance that Radhashyam.Narendra, Zamindar, entertains about 500 Sannyásis and Vairágis during the four rainy months of the year. And yet he is hardly ready to spend ten rupees a month for the diffusion of useful knowledge. Education according to the people is essentially a

secular object...To point out to the people the intrinsic worth of education is according to them exposing our weakest side...The inhabitants of Kendrapara have actually said that I was sent by the Government 'to curry favour with the people'. Inhabitants of other villages wonder at the Government being so unreasonable as to send a person for advising them to establish schools without being at the same time ready to maintain those schools at their own expense. The above is a sad picture, but it is nevertheless true...I do not however wholly despair as yet, but what I wish to make you aware of is that nothing can be so expeditiously done here as in Bengal proper, nor can a proportionate number of schools be expected to be established. There has not been, I believe, a single instance of a respectable school being ever established and maintained from private resources in Orissa. Everything must be begun here."

While living in Orissa R.D.H. does not appear to have quite lost touch with his Calcutta friends. In October 1857 he wrote to Babu Kanailal Pain and expressed his satisfaction regarding the continued prosperity of the Hitaisini Sabha. He wrote: "I exceedingly regret to learn that your laudable endeavour to make some provision for Babu Akshay Kumar Dutt is likely to be



defeated by certain persons. It is the height of injustice and unthankfulness to refrain from bestowing a pension on him. Try your best and await the result." He thus concludes the letter : " With regard to my own affairs I have to say that my prospects of success are not very cheering. Orissa is deservedly called the Bœotia of India. The diffusion of useful knowledge in this country is a very difficult affair."

In 1856 he thus jotted down some of his opinions: "The Bible is on the one hand believed to the very letter, and on the other it is trampled upon as a repository of falsehoods. The two extremes are to be avoided by a reasonable man. The best interpreter of the Bible is he who is a native of the East, alike versed in Asiatic and European learning and possessed of a clear head. The Orientals (as the Europeans call them) use a peculiar style of language which is never to be taken literally. The modern Europeans do not (I may almost say, cannot) understand that language. Hence the various opinions concerning the Bible.

" That the Bible contains fictions is admitted ; but it does not necessarily follow that it contains nothing but fictions. The truth is that there are fictions, exaggerated facts and truths in the Bible. The prophecies, miracles, etc., are in part fictions

and in part true, of course much exaggerated by oriental colouring. The modern enlightened idea of the Deity the writers of the Old Testament had not. They have mostly represented God as the common people do.

"I have read somewhere (perhaps in Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary) that there were at a time fifty different Gospels, out of which the four now in use are chosen. But this fact does not at all shake my belief that the life of Jesus is true in the main. I do not believe in the life of Jesus in detail.

"I am far from agreeing with those who maintain that such a person as Jesus Christ did not really exist. When I read Volney's 'Ruins' his attempt to reduce Jesus to an astronomical figure appeared to me ridiculous. Thomas Paine at first believed in the existence of Jesus, but when he was much persecuted, he became so angry as to declare that Jesus did not exist. He did not say this when he was calm. For my part, I believe Jesus Christ to have been a very extraordinary man, on the authority of Mahammad.

"It was Rammohan Roy who adequately comprehended the glory of Jesus. Greatness is truly appreciated by a truly great man! What nobleness of mind did Rammohan Roy display when he published 'The Precepts of Jesus'!

"The little experience I have derived from the world enables me to affirm that the world is full of hypocrisy. Sincerity is to be rarely met with. This is undoubtedly caused by the artificial state of society.

"The books of the Bible, as they were composed by their respective authors, are not extant. There are very many interpolations in them.

"The peculiar excellence of the religion of Christ is that it is a *convertive* religion ; perhaps, the custom was imitated from the Buddhists.

"The Rev. C. H. A. Dall (American Unitarian Missionary for the propagation of the Gospel in India) says that I should believe that Jesus Christ was the most perfect human character. I cannot subscribe to this opinion. It is purely a historical question. And history does not allow us to speak with confidence that such a one had been the most eminent of men. But Mr. Dall insists—'Tell me the name of another man who can be placed with Christ side by side.' I answer, I cannot tell. But this does not at all favour the belief that Christ and only Christ was the most perfect man. Mr. Dall would not allow Goutama to have been equal to Christ, because, he says, a detailed account of the life of Goutama is not extant. But supposing there is no detailed account, is not the antiquity of Goutama a suffi-

cient reason for the want ? It is, I think, improper to enhance the importance of one by lessening that of another. But, says Mr. Dall, how can I follow more than one leader ? In reply to this I say that the case is not exactly so. There is but one way to eternal bliss, and the same one may be shown to me by ten persons and am I not allowed to thank them all ? Is it that person who has shown me the way first, who is to be revered above all ? Then the case of Christ is not universal ; for there are many persons who are brought up in the Buddhist religion from their infancy. Are they to revere Buddha above every other leader ? The character of Jesus was such as to elicit admiration from everyone, and the account of his life is sufficient to induce us to imitate him. Why then so much exalting of his character ? Jesus Christ is one of the best guides of men to eternal bliss.

“One cause of the priests being averse to change their religious opinion, though internally convinced of their error, is that they have not fitted themselves for duties, other than clerical, which Society demands. It requires great independence of mind to adopt a new opinion, if that appears founded on truth.”

It will probably be felt that some of Mr. Dall's statements were open to challenge. In spite of

Goutama's undoubted antiquity a great deal more is, in fact, known about his life than it is possible to gather from the Gospels regarding the early life of Jesus. Moreover, as an example of renunciation and for genuine sympathy with suffering humanity the life-story of Goutama stands, in the eyes of all disinterested observers, on a much higher level than that of Jesus. It must be said that R. D. H. took Mr. Dall's statements for granted far too readily, although that gentleman had apparently no special knowledge regarding the life and teachings of one of the two personages involved in the comparison ; but in pronouncing judgment upon the dialectics of R. D. H. it is necessary to take into account his comparative youth and the slender educational facilities which were available to him. No less a man than the philosophical Mr. Dennys thus recognised his attainments in a letter dated (2 Park Villa, Kensington Park, London) December 19, 1856 : "I am glad you know and approve of what Theodore Parker and Emerson (a fine thinker but less practical than Parker) are doing in America, and what Newman, Maurice and a few others are doing, or rather aiming to do in England. It is uphill work with the pioneers of progress everywhere, and in no class of subjects more so than on mental ones, and in no part of the world perhaps more than in Europe."

## CHAPTER IX

### VISIT TO ENGLAND

R. D. H. finally decided to throw up his appointment in the Education Department on account of ill-health. Dr. Roer wrote to him on March 31, 1858: "I greatly regret that your health obliges you to resign an appointment which is so much to your taste and acquirements, and am the more sorry as you have given me entire satisfaction by the faithful and able discharge of your duties, and as I am sure from my knowledge of your character and the zeal you have for the welfare of your countrymen that you would have distinguished yourself in the Department of Education." In March 1861 his old friend Mr. Dall offered to take him to England and he made up his mind to avail himself of the opportunity to improve his position in life. Becharam had so far put up with what he regarded as his son's eccentricities ; but R. D. H's proposed visit to England came as the final blow which sundered the tie which still bound the old man to his only surviving son. The first step taken by R. D. H. was to remove his wife from Jagaddal to her younger sister's house at Sadipur on the right bank of the Damodar river in Burdwan.

On this occasion his wife had her first experience of railway travelling. His sister-in-law Nabin-kumari had been married to Rám-tarak Bhattacharji, a professional religious preceptor of the orthodox type. Here at Sadipur he met and discoursed with Babu Mohini-mohan Mitra, the well-known Zamindar of that place. On March 10, 1861, he wrote to his wife from Calcutta and told her how she was to conduct herself while he was away. He advised her to confine her expenses to Rs5/- per month. "We are very poor in worldly substance," he writes in his Diary, "but rich in God's grace." At the end of March he was in Calcutta, making final preparations for his voyage and bidding farewell to friends, amongst whom were the well-known missionaries, Long and Bomwetsch, with whom he had been long acquainted. Early in April he paid a farewell visit to Chandipur, where his wife was then staying in her father's house.

On April 11, 1861—which he speaks of as a day in the calendar of his life never to be forgotten—he left Calcutta for England with Mr. Dall per P. and O. s. s. *Nemesis*. "The English Diary of an Indian Student," edited by the present writer and published by the Dacca Ashyutosh Library in 1903, gives a brief account of his voyage to England and residence there for about

two years.\* It is needless to reproduce the account here, and it will suffice to refer only to some of the striking incidents that happened and some of the prominent men he met during his sojourn in England.

In taking R. D. H. to England Mr. Dall, the Unitarian Missionary, appears to have had an axe to grind. The subject is thus mentioned in a leaderette written by the well-known journalist Kristo Das Pal in the *Hindoo Patriot* (June 7, 1862): "The next Bengali [*i. e.* after Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, two native converts who entered the medical service and Mr. Gyanendra Mohan Tagore] who has gone to England is a free-thinker, hitherto by no means widely known to his countrymen. The Rev. Mr. Dall, the American Unitarian Missionary, who sympathised much with this Hindoo free-thinker, took him to England with the secret hope of converting him to his own faith. The tough Bengali would not, however, yield, and he was left to shift his own way. Mr. Hodgson Pratt, one of the devoted band of true friends of India, then took

\*A more detailed account of his travels written by him under his favourite *nom de plume* of "Omichand" appeared in the *Hindoo Patriot* in 1863. It carried the narrative of his outward voyage no farther than Ceylon and was never finished.



him up by the hand and assisted him with the earnest philanthropy of Christian charity. The early Sanskrit attainments of Babu Rakhal Das Halдар, for such is his name, stood in good service to him in the hour of difficulty and distress and through the influence of Mr. Pratt and other friends, he obtained the office of Professor of Sanskrit and Bengali in the University College, London.....He contributes to some of the leading literary periodicals, and though we regret much that he has been driven to the toil of the pen, still it is a matter of no small satisfaction that a Bengali has succeeded in England in earning his bread by cultivating literature alone. The readers of this journal may trace this Bengali in the remarkable letter which we lately published, containing his first impressions of England, and which, we may add, was republished all the country over." Reference is made in the same article to Messrs. Satyendra Nath Tagore and Monomohan Ghosh who were candidates for the Indian Civil Service and to Mr. Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt who went to qualify himself for the Bar. All these three gentlemen followed R. D. H. to England.

The matter between R. D. H. and Mr. Dall came to a head in the middle of 1861 when it formed the subject of some correspondence in

the *Inquirer*, the Unitarian organ. In July, a meeting of Unitarians was called, at Mr. Dall's request, at the house of the Rev. Mr. Ham, in Euston Square. The upshot was that Mr. Dall agreed to pay the expenses of R. D. H. in England and his passage back to India. R. D. H. however elected to hang on his own hook, and he determined to have nothing further to do with the American Missionary.\* He was greatly helped at this time by Mr. Dennys with whom he had been in correspondence in 1856-57 and Mr.

\*In the course of a lecture delivered in Howrah twelve years later Mr. Dall thus referred to R. D. H. :—"Next he (Mr. Dall) guardedly showed the course of a Bengali gentleman whom he had the satisfaction of taking with him to England in 1861 ; his friend's life on steamship ; his way across Europe ; his four days in Paris, visiting there, among other wonders, the Imperial Library and attending High Mass at the Madeleine ; then his cordial greeting, though a Bengali stranger, from Max Müller and the invitation to Oxford ; the aid extended him by Hodgson Pratt and others, English gentlemen and Anglo-Indians ; his well-furnished room and his pleased English class-mates at University College, London. This Bengali gentleman returned from England in splendid health, after a year of study, to a position of honour and emolument in Bengal. As soon as permitted by the increase of his salary he repaid to Mr. Dall, unasked, every rupee expended years before on his trip to England." (*Indian Daily News*, January 13, 1873).

Hodgson Pratt, a retired Bengal Civilian whom he had known in India. Mrs. Helen Adam Withall, a niece of Rajah Rammohan Roy's friend Mr. William Adam, writing in 1903 to Nirmal Chandra, the youngest son of R. D. H., says that Mr. Pratt "at once thought of Mr. Adam as suitable to advise with, so the result was that your father came to board with uncle and myself, Mr Pratt finding the necessary money which, as you know, your father repaid. During your father's stay with us he and I were very friendly and he used to talk to me about his house and his father. He went to Notting Hill to give lessons to some one there in Bengali and often returned very tired. He suffered in the cold weather from chilblains and I did all I could do to relieve him. Hence his grateful and brotherly attachment to me. After living with us some time your father became an inmate of University College, Gower Street, and we did not see him often after that."\*

\*R. D. H. thus expressed his gratefulness to this good lady in a letter written to her in 1886: "My thoughts of you are not confined to any particular month of the year, as wife and I have occasion now and again to refer to your kindness towards us." He thus wrote to her in the following year, about seven months before his death:—"I desire exceedingly to possess a photo of your own, and of your husband. On this side of life, there does not seem

In September 1861 Mr. Dennys gave him an introduction to Dr. Charles Mackay, the well-known journalist. Mr. Dennys wrote : " Mr. Halдар's chief object in visiting England is to pursue his studies for a limited period at one of the Universities and to accomplish this will have to depend to some extent on his ability as a writer for the periodical Press. If you can in any way aid him in this endeavour, and will kindly do so, you will confer a great favour on a highly endowed stranger, and a correspondingly large obligation on me." R. D. H. also succeeded in getting an introduction to Charles Dickens, and he contributed several articles to the *All the Year Round*. In an article on cotton cultivation in Bengal, which appeared in that periodical (October, 1861) he thus refers to our cultivators :—" The *ryots* are a

to be any chance of my seeing again one who has always been dearer to me than most of my own blood-relations ; but please let me have the lesser pleasure of having even a shadow of yours. My wife would be delighted ; she is never tired of hearing, even at this great distance of time, about the manifold instances of your kindness to me." Miss Adam was married to Mr. George Withall of Beaconsfield, Bucks. She continued to correspond with the present writer until her death which occurred in January 1909 when she was nearly 83 years of age. In 1897-98 she received Nirmal Chandra, (the youngest son of R. D. H.) who was then at Coopers Hill, with open arms.

timid race of men, who seldom dare make any complaints, especially as the native officials take care to impress them with the falsehood that the *Sáheb* (meaning the European) is himself determined not to pay them more. Should any *ryot* ever venture to lay his grievances before a European planter, he is generally met with a *Chullá jáo gadhá*!—"Get away, you ass!" either because the European is duped by his wily servants, or because he thinks it inconsistent with his dignity to interfere with minor details: sometimes, perhaps, because of sheer idleness. The consequence is, that the *ryots* grumble, and blame their employers, and jog on." In one of his contributions to the *All the Year Round* (April, 1862) he gave a free translation of a Bengali pamphlet containing an account of the first marriage under the reformed rites introduced by Babu Debendra Nath Tagore. It was about the marriage of Babu Hemendra Nath Mukerji with Babu Debendra Nath's second daughter Sukumari Debi. The author's title "A Brahmo Marriage" was altered by Mr. Dickens to "A Curious Marriage Ceremony", presumably because he thought that the term "Brahmo" would be utterly unintelligible to ordinary English readers. In January of the same year he sent to another English periodical a translation of Rajah Rammohan Roy's

Bengali tract on religious worship. A copy of the tract (printed in 1829) had been presented by Mr. William Adam, along with other books, to the library of University College, London.

## CHAPTER X.

### VISITS TO OXFORD AND BRISTOL

R. D. H. arrived in London on May 21, 1861. He gave his impressions of England in a letter which appeared in the *Hindoo Patriot* of May 26, 1862: "I have no doubt that had the climate of England been ten times worse, Englishmen by their ideas of taste, ingenuity, industry and spirit of co-operation would have rendered their country as inviting as it is to-day. The country towns are the very models of elegance, cleanliness and convenience. I shall never forget Clifton with its charming downs, Oxford with its ancient buildings and fine-looking lawns, or Brighton with its pure air and cheerfulness. But if you will have an adequate idea of what the English people can achieve you must stand at the triangle before the Royal Exchange in London at 4 o'clock on any week-day, or at the Waterloo Bridge on some bright morning, and look at the 'ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples' all around you: can you help exclaiming that Rome in her proudest days had not beheld magnificence like this? No reflecting mind can fail to notice the causes which combine to make the English people great, and the want of which makes us what we are—mere chatter-boxes but do-littles.

“Some parts of London are as bad as (I had almost said) some parts of Calcutta ; but altogether, London is a solid growth. The people can ill afford to have open spaces around their houses ; and so the town is full of large and lofty buildings, each divided into distinct suites of apartments, inhabited by distinct families. If they have no extensive private gardens, they have something better. The elegantly laid out squares, parks and public gardens are open to all, and are thronged on a fair day with well-dressed people, some walking hand in hand, others sitting on chairs or benches ; the children playing on the lawns, the babies wheeled about in small hand-carriages, and altogether producing a picturesque effect. While here, I am constrained to remember with shame our Bengali female dress. When will my countrymen—at least the educated among them—induce their wives and daughters to adopt a costume resembling the English ? The use of crinoline is the growing fashion amongst English ladies. *Punch's* crusade against it is almost coeval with its introduction from Paris ; but that witsnapper has proved himself quite impotent in his war against the taste of the softer sex. My own disgust against crinoline is owing to the fact that I am occasionally almost suffocated by it in the omnibuses. At any rate, in a warm



country like Bengal, it ought to be very acceptable to the ladies.

"The meanest street in London is paved. With nicely-attired pedestrians and rows of shops and buildings on both sides, and innumerable vehicles of various shapes and sizes, a London street gives you the very *ideal* of a town. I had thought that the regal carriage of Roopchand Pankhi of Calcutta was a production of his own whim; but I find that the invention is English. The Hansom cabs of London are the safest, but look very odd, the driver having his seat at the top of the back. The floor of houses on a level with the street is occupied by shops, which are remarkably clean. The shop-fronts are all glazed and the articles for sale are so arranged as to be seen to the best advantage. No nation can excel the English in the art of advertising and puffing. Advertisements stare you in the face everywhere—from the walls of houses, at the Railway Stations, even in the omnibuses and cabs. No wonder, then, that Napoleon the Great had called the English a nation of shopkeepers."

He had not been long in England when he availed himself of Professor Max Müller's kind invitation to Oxford. He was accompanied by Mr. Dall. He records (June 12) in his rough Diary: "Stopping a few minutes in the drawing-

room (the house is numbered 64 in High Street), we came downstairs and the Professor showed us round his Library. It is not very large, but very rich in philological works. He read to me a few Sanskrit *mantras* from his edition of the Vedas, also a few lines in Bengali from Ananda Chandra Vedantabagis's edition of 'Panchadasi.' His pronunciation was remarkably good, considering that the Professor has never in his life visited India. We went out, and the Professor took us to his own Lecture room. It was a gala-day at Oxford. We went to the Theatre, where the grand event of the day—the Commemoration—was to take place. We found the galleries were being filled; but as it was too early, the Doctor led us to the New Museum of Physical Science. We then hastened back to the Theatre that we might not miss the procession. The galleries were filled; most eminent men were there. Besides the College students, there were distinguished representatives of all classes, statesmen, barristers, doctors, men of science, divines, poets, painters, sculptors and engineers. Some men having their hats on, the undergraduates shouted from the galleries 'Hats off!' It was 10 o'clock, and cheers began to reverberate inside the building. 'The Ladies!' 'The married Ladies!' 'The unmarried Ladies!', 'The Ladies who wish to be

married!', 'The Ladies who ought to be married!', 'The engaged Ladies!', 'The pretty girls of Oxford!' and several others being given, loud cheers came forth. 'Lord Derby' was received with applause; not exactly so when 'Lord Palmerston' was given, and for the name of 'Bright' a good many groans. The Queen's name was cheered loudly several times. In this vast assembly I found 'Liberty' and 'Bondage' together. The procession entered the Theatre at 11 A. M. The National Anthem was sung; the Vice-Chancellor made the opening speech. A cry was heard 'Why are there no degrees?' No answer. Then began an uproar, which made the public orator sit down. The Vice-Chancellor was understood to say in Latin that he would adjourn the meeting unless the uproar ceased. A voice from the gallery: '*Placet ne vobis, Undergraduati!*' several voices answered: '*Non placet.*' Then the prizemen recited the prize-poems, amid loud and frequent plaudits. We did not care to hear all the poems; so went out and passed through Christ Church College, and entered the Radcliffe Library. A little incident occurred on the way, which amused me. A certain Professor had opposed Max Müller, when the latter was a candidate for the Boden Professorship of Sanskrit, Mr. Monier Williams being Dr. Müller's rival. To-day the

same Professor wished to be friends with Müller and wanted to shake hands with him. But Dr. Müller refused resolutely to offer his hand. The All Soul's College. Luncheon at 2 o'clock. Made the acquaintance of Sir Charles Trevelyan, the ex-Governor of Madras. Attended the musical fête given by the members of the Apollo University Lodge in the New College gardens, over the gate of which is written 'Manners makyth the man,' being the motto of William who founded the College. Having taken leave of Prof. Müller, who treated me so very kindly, Mr. Dall and I walked through the grove, thence to the Botanic Gardens, and the Magdalen College." As bearing on the use of the expressions *placet* and *non placet* the following extract from one of Mr. Gladstone's letters to his brother, dated February 6, 1829, when he was a Christ Church student, may be of interest: "I saw yesterday a most interesting scene in the Convocation house. The occasion was a debate on the anti-Catholic petition, which it has long been the practice of the University to send up year by year. This time it was worded in the most gentle and moderate terms possible. All the ordinary business there is transacted in Latin; I mean such things as putting the question, speaking, etc.; and this rule, I assure you, stops many a mouth, and I dare say saves the Roman

Catholics many a hard word. There were rather over two hundred doctors and masters of art present. Three speeches were made, two against and one in favour of sending up the petition. Instead of 'Aye' and 'No' they had *placet* and *non-placet*, and in place of a member dividing the House, the question was, '*Petitne aliquis scrutinium ?*' which was answered by '*Peto !*' '*Peto !*' from many quarters. However, when the scrutiny took place it was found that the petition was carried by 156 to 48."\* R. D. H. did not long delay a pilgrimage (as he himself describes it) to the tomb of Rajah Rammohan Roy. On June 16 he went to Bristol where he availed himself of the hospitality of Mrs. Champion and called on Miss Mary Carpenter at Red Lodge House. On the following day he drove in a phaeton to Stapleton Grove with the Rev. Mr. James, Mrs. Browne of Clifton and Mrs. Brown's mother to the house of Miss Estlin, the daughter of Dr. Estlin, who had attended the Rajah in his last illness. He was shown by Miss Estlin a cast of the Rajah's head taken a few hours after his death, on September 27, 1833. He also received from the lady, as a memento, snippings of the Rajah's hair which had been cut by Dr. Estlin the day before his death

\*Morley's "Life of Gladstone," Vol. I. p. 53.

at Stapleton Grove. After inspecting other relics R. D. H. drove on to Stapleton Grove which he thus describes in his rough Diary : "Stapleton Grove is a most lovely spot and I thought that the Rajah's death had taken place in a paradise. We entered the room where my illustrious countryman had drawn his last breath. The natural scenery looking out of the windows was indeed enchanting. From conversation with R. M. Roy's surviving friends I could easily picture to myself the calm and glorious moon-light night of September 27, when the Rajah lay stretched on his bed in a strange land, far away from his childhood's home, surrounded by strange people ; his case pronounced hopeless by eminent medical men like Dr. Pritchard ; Miss Hare (sister or cousin\* of

\*Miss Mary Carpenter in her " Last Days of Rammohan Roy in England" describes this lady as the daughter of David Hare. As a matter of fact David Hare was never married. Miss Sophia Dobson Collet writing to R. D. H. in 1882 said that " Miss Janet Hare, who nursed the Rajah in his last illness," was then alive. She added that Miss Janet kept house for her uucles John and Joseph (brothers of David Hare) until the latter's marriage (about 1860). The reader may refer to Mr. Peary Chand Mittra's " Biographical Sketch of David Hare". (Calcutta : Newman, 1877). Mr. Arnott says in the *Athenæum* that the Hare family " discharged the duties of hospitality towards him [Rammohan Roy] ever since his arrival in England, with a

our good David) sobbing with grief beside the dying man; Rajaram, the Rajah's adopted son, lying almost senseless."

kindness, delicacy and entire disinterestedness which are honourable to the English character." Mr. Peary Chand Mittra says : " During the Rajah's illness Miss Hare took great care of him, and often read the Bible to him. John Hare, Joseph Hare and James Hare were present, with others, at the interment of Rammohan Roy on October 18, 1833."

## CHAPTER XI

### A WEEK IN IRELAND

On his return to London from Bristol R. D. H. became acquainted with several eminent men of the time. At a soirée held (June 27, 1861) at Manchester New College, University Hall, he made the acquaintance of Mr. James Martineau, the well-known Unitarian preacher, Professor De Morgan, the great mathematician and Mr. Mudge at whose Chapel Rammohan Roy used to attend Divine service. A few days previously he had been introduced to Professor Masson of University College and to a sister of Harriet Martineau; and later on he met Sir Edward Ryan, late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Calcutta, and he also got to know Professor Goldstücker the great Orientalist. In August he called on the Rev. William Adam, the friend of Rammohan Roy, who made kind enquiries about his old Calcutta friends. Mr. Adam had been Commissioner of Vernacular Education in Bengal in the time of Lord William Bentinck. He is the author of several valuable educational reports and of a learned work entitled "An Inquiry into the Theories of History" (London: W. H. Allen, 1862). In 1821 Rammohan Roy is said to



have converted him from Trinitarianism, whereupon his own countrymen called him in contempt "the second fallen Adam"; and in that year, in conjunction with him Rammohan Roy founded the Unitarian Committee of which the Brahmo Samaj was a development. Shortly after Mr. Adam's death which occurred in 1881 his niece, Mrs. Adam Withal, wrote to R. D. H.: "If you have received the copy of *The Inquirer* which I sent to you for the sake of the obituary notice of his death you will perceive that it is not strictly correct. Rammohan Roy did not 'convert' uncle, nor did uncle 'convert' Rammohan Roy; they had each their own independent views and beliefs, but they were much in harmony with each other." There is an interesting reference to the conversion of Mr. Adam (who was originally a Baptist Missionary) to Unitarianism in Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohan Roy," page 252.

In August R. D. H. went over to Ireland with Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson Pratt, proceeding to Dublin by way of Chester and Holyhead. He attended the meetings of the Social Science Association which were being held at this time and was also present at a meeting of members of literary societies presided over by Lord Brougham in the Round Room, Mansion House. On August

18 he attended Divine Service at Castle Chapel, where the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Brougham were present ; and in the afternoon he went to the Lord Chancellor's house accompanied by Mr. Brady, and dined there. On the following day R. D. H. read a paper on "Education in Bengal and its results" at the fifth annual meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science held in Dublin. The meeting was presided over by Sir John Shaw-Lefevre. After he had read the paper Mr. Hodgson Pratt, late Government Inspector of Schools in Bengal, made some observations, which are important as showing the advance which Bengal has made during the last sixty years. Speaking from his own experience he informed the meeting "that the natives of India, though ready to follow as far as they were led, and although sufficiently clever at acquiring a knowledge of literature and science, did not display any marked original ability. Now, it might be asked, why so intelligent a race did not produce some men who might exhibit original power, and why all the talents of their ablest men were spent merely in following the track of their European instructors ? It was well known that in former times India produced philosophers and mathematicians of very great eminence. Why was the case different in the present day ? There

were, in his opinion, two reasons for this fact. One was, that the Government did not give these young natives who were educated in the schools and colleges of Bengal sufficient sphere for the exercise of their abilities, or place before them adequate rewards for ambitious talent. Another was, that when these young men had completed their education they returned to old associations. They were brought back under the influence of an effete religion and a decaying civilization, and from this influence they could not wholly emancipate themselves. Seeing this fact, he had suggested that some three or four of the most deserving and talented young men should be sent over yearly to England to complete their education at one of the Universities. It was not so much on account of the increased opportunities for learning that they would have in English Universities that he made this suggestion, but because they would obtain that knowledge of the world which was so necessary to young men of talent. They would be brought under the influence of Englishmen of their own age, they would have opportunities of observing English society and of seeing the life and manners of the country to which they owed allegiance. In this way they would be fitted for something more than second-class clerkships and inferior offices, and qualify themselves for admis-

sion into the higher places of the Civil Service, which it was not only an expensive, but an impolitic rule to confine to Englishmen. The service was at present wholly inadequate to the wants of the country. He hoped to see some of the vacancies in the higher offices opened to young Hindus of talent and education. He believed that Mr. Haldar came to England for the purpose he had stated, and the paper just read was an excellent argument in favour of the views which he (Mr. Pratt) advocated."

The same evening R. D. H. was present at Dublin Castle, where the Lord Lieutenant received 1800 persons, members and associates of the National Association. He particularly noticed the Lord Lieutenant's kindness and condescension. He adds in his Diary: "I had never before seen such a large assemblage of female beauties." Altogether he had a very pleasant week in Dublin. Lord Brougham was an eloquent advocate and public speaker of the time. He fought for the emancipation of slaves and laboured strenuously in the cause of popular education.

Amongst the Indians he met in England was Mr. Gyanendra Mohan Tagore, the son of Babu Prasanna Coomar Tagore. Gyanendra Mohan had turned Christian, married a daughter

of the Rev. Krishnamohan Banerjee and had settled down in England. He was Professor of Hindu Law and the Bengali language in University College, London. R. D. H. afterwards became Mr. Tagore's assistant as teacher of Bengali. He met in London a Persian convert named Abdul Masih, who had been there for a short time only, had received very little education, and held a very low opinion of English men and women. R. D. H. says: "I tried in vain to correct the prejudices of this uneducated Asiatic." Another Muhammadan gentleman he came across was Mr. Syed Abdulla who was Professor of Hindustani in the University College. Mr. Abdulla had married an Englishwoman. There was staying in London at the time a gentleman from the Madras Presidency named Mr. Purusottam Mudeliar, a Hindu gentleman of the orthodox type, who adhered to his caste practices even to the extent of putting the customary caste-mark on his forehead. This gentleman is referred to by Babu Kristodas Pal in a letter written to R. D. H. in May 1862.\* R. D. H. also got to know somewhat intimately Mr. Sadasiu Deoji of

\*This letter and some other letters addressed to R. D. H. by Babus Kristo Das Pal, Keshab Chunder Sen and Rajendra Lala Mittra were republished in the *Indian Mirror* of February 12, 1908.

Bombay whose death occurred in December. In October 1861 he came in contact with Mr. Henry Crabbe Robinson whose literary meetings in London are described in the "Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence," published in 1869. Amongst the men he met at Mr. Robinson's place on one occasion were Dr. Boot, who had known Rammohan Roy personally, and Professor Edward Spencer Beesly of University College, London. Dr. Boot gave some interesting information regarding the Rajah. Some of these are noted in the "English Diary of an Indian Student." Mr. Beesly held the chair of Professor of History in University College, London, from 1860 down to 1893. He was well known for his profound sympathies for popular progress. Many years ago he renounced Christianity and adopted Positivism, the Religion of Humanity, and laboured with voice and pen for its propagation. For many years he edited the *Positivist Review* and often lectured for the London Positivist Society. Mr. Beesly co-operated with Mr. Frederic Harrison and others, in securing a sound legal status for Trades Unionism and in opposing aggressive Imperialism. He combined (says the *Literary Guide* of London in an interesting obituary notice) remarkable political insight with zeal for education and social betterment. In 1903

the present writer sent him a copy of the "English Diary of an Indian Student" and received the following reply : "I am much obliged to you for sending me your father's Diary. I well remember him. I have been much interested in the account of his distinguished and useful career and I am very sorry that it should have terminated so prematurely. I have lived to be 72 and though I have only one good lung I am fairly well." Professor Beesly died in 1915 at the age of 84.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME EMINENT ENGLISHMEN.

Mr. William Adam took R. D. H. on October 12 to the Library of University College. He introduced R. D. H. to Mr. Charles C. Atkinson, the Secretary to the College Council. Two days later R. D. H. removed to University Hall. Fortunately for him quite a galaxy of talent at this time presided over the destinies of the great University. One of the Professors with whom he first came in close personal contact was Mr. J. J. Tayler. He was a frequent guest under Mr. Tayler's hospitable roof, where he had an opportunity of meeting many of the eminent University Professors. Reference has already been made to Professor David Masson who held the chair of English Language and Literature at University College. He contributed numerous articles to the *Quarterly* and other Reviews, to the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and the "English Cyclopædia," and was for many years the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*. Of the numerous books written by him his famous "Life of Milton" is perhaps the best known. He was an eminent biographer, philologist, historian and critic. He died in October 1907 at the age of 85. Another great man whose



teachings greatly influenced the Bengali student was Mr. F. D. Maurice. As founder of the Working Men's College he considerably advanced the cause of general education. He held the Professorship of Divinity in King's College, but resigned the appointment upon the authorities raising objections to his religious views, specially as regards the eternity of punishment. The incident was thus referred to by the *Indian Daily News* in June 1914 : "It was Frederick Maurice who was one of the first who taught there was no hell and whose views caused the celebrated criticism of the City Magnate : 'What, no hell ! then what may I ask becomes of the consolations of the Christian religion ?'" Mr. Maurice died in 1884. In a biographical sketch written at the time by one of his disciples, Colonel R. D. Osborn, who is still remembered in Calcutta as one of the best friends of India, the religious belief of Mr. Maurice was thus referred to : "To speak of the Bible as being itself the revelation of God was to fall under that bondage to the letter, which had been the cause of all the divisions, the religious wars, and religious persecutions of Christendom. The Bible was not itself the revelation, but the history of a revelation which had come to psalmists, prophets and apostles in the course of their actual human experiences. Christianity, in short,

was presented by him, not as a system of dogmatic theology, nor as anything at all resembling it, but as a discovery of the sources of life and light for which all men everywhere have been painfully seeking after. The (so-called) doctrines of Christianity had neither worth nor power in themselves.”\* Mr. Maurice was a contemporary and friend of Hallam and Gladstone in their college days. “I know many,” says Hallam, “whom Maurice has moulded like a second nature, and these too, men eminent for intellectual power, to whom the presence of a commanding spirit would in all other cases be a signal rather for rivalry than reverential acknowledgment.” “I knew Maurice well,” says Mr. Gladstone in one of his notes of reminiscence, “had heard superlative accounts of him from Cambridge, and really strove hard to make them all realities to myself.”† Mr. Maurice is the author of the excellent aphorism—ONLY WHEN EACH MAN SEEKS NOT HIS OWN INTEREST, BUT THE INTEREST OF OTHERS, IS HE TRULY HUMAN. The name of Professor A. De Morgan will be remembered along with those of a few other men of Science, like Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge who have had the courage to extend

\* *The Statesman*, May 16, 1884.

† Morley's “Life of Gladstone,” Vol. I, p. 54.

their researches beyond the limits of the material world which is the subject of ordinary experience. He wrote in 1863 : "I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called *spiritual* which cannot be taken by any rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake." While residing in University Hall, London, R. D. H. was very closely associated with Professor Francis William Newman, a brother of the famous Cardinal Newman. There was a third brother, Charles. Mr. G. J. Holyoake in his "Bygones Worth Remembering" (London : T. Fisher Unwin, 1905) thus refers to the three brothers : "The eldest of the three was John Henry, the famous Cardinal. The third brother, Charles, was a propagandist of insurgent opinion. Francis was a pure Theist, John was a Roman Catholic, and Charles a Naturist, and nothing besides ; he would be classed as an Agnostic now. Francis William was the handsomest. He had classical features, a placid, clear, and confident voice, and an impressive smile which lighted all his face.....His Theism was of such intense, unquestioning devotion, of such passionate confidence, as was seen in Maz-

\* Preface to "From Matter to Spirit." (Longmans).

zini and Theodore Parker of America. Voltaire and Thomas Paine were not more determined Theists. In all else, Francis was human." Mr. Sieveking in his "Memoirs and Letters of F. W. Newman" (London : Kegan Paul, 1909) says that the Professor was "certainly one of the greatest mathematical and classical scholars of his day. Alfred Wills, Sir Edward Fry and Mr. De Morgan were among his students. He was a vegetarian, and a staunch champion of 'Votes for Women' when any such championship was altogether exceptional, and he had many of the characteristics of the humanitarian reformer and philanthropist. He enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Martineau and Miss Swanwick, and he was a lifelong champion of the weak." R. D. H. refers in his English Diary to 'the kind help rendered by Professor Newman to the cause of Indian education. The matter is thus alluded to by Pandit Sivanath Sastri in his "History of the Brahmo Samaj" : "A tract called an 'Appeal to the British Nation for the Promotion of Education in India' was accordingly published and was circulated in England through Prof. F. W. Newman, with whom correspondence was opened from this time. Prof. Newman threw himself with great earnestness into this work, and with the aid of Babu Rakhal Das Halidar, an enthusiastic member of the

Brahmo Samaj, who was then residing in England as a student, tried to rouse the interest of the British public in the educational project. He sought the assistance of several eminent retired Anglo-Indian officials like Sir Charles Trevelyan, many of whom, however, turned a cold shoulder to the project and the English agitation seems to have fallen through." The same subject is referred to in a letter dated Calcutta Brahmo Samaj, Jorasanko, the 22nd May 1862, from Mr. Keshab Chunder Sen to R. D. H. : "I am happy you are co-operating with our worthy friend Mr. Newman in the matter of our appeal to the British public for the promotion of education in India and I hope you will devote yourself to it with adequate earnestness, as on its success India's real progress mainly depends. The diffusion of education amongst the females and the masses of the people of our country will tend, it is needless to tell you, to bring about not only an intellectual but a social and moral reformation." The *Inquirer* of London published a letter from R. D. H. written from University Hall on March 1, 1862 in which he gave some extracts from the "Appeal to the British Nation" and commended the appeal to its readers. He wrote : "There may be a few people in this country who maintain that India has been conquered by the sword,

and must be *kept down* by the sword, thus evincing a large preponderance of the selfish and material element in their own minds ; but the more general opinion (held by persons true to the spirit of the age) seems to be that a time will probably come when England will find it more for her interest to have a mere commercial intercourse with India, than to keep her in political subjection—a time when both the countries will independently flourish ; India, with admiration and gratitude for England's magnanimity and benevolence ; and England, with just pride for having raised India in the scale of independent nations. Such a state of things can never come unless India is properly educated to take care of herself. But what right has she to expect aid from Britain in a matter which, if successful, would enable her alone to enjoy the greatest benefit ? To an ancient Greek or Roman, such an idea would have appeared absurd. In an age, however, when doing good is more appreciated than mere abstaining from evil, when laws aim more at *reforming* than at *severely punishing* criminals, when people at least pretend to place right before might ; when, in short, there is a general aspiration to live up to the teachings of Christ, it is but natural that the amelioration of the conquered should be regarded as a *duty* of the conquering

country. *Prima facie*, India should not look beyond herself for the means of increasing her own welfare ; but it may be said, that had she an adequate strength of mind and steadiness of purpose, she would not have needed the dictation of either the Mahommedans or the English ; on the contrary, she would have prospered under her own rulers in her peculiar way. The truth is, that the system of caste, a sensual and debasing religion, luxury, mutual jealousy, and want of confidence among the people of India, but not any want of physical courage, were the causes which made the country so easy a prey to Mahmood of Ghazni ; and several centuries must pass in her systematic training before India can regain even her former position. Providence seems to have destined the modern nations of Europe, especially the people of Great Britain, to be the regenerators of the world ; and it is upon this that the natives of Bengal have grounded their hope." A short article on Francis Newman containing two of the Professor's letters to R. D. H. on the subject of Indian Education appeared in the *Modern Review* for May 1920.

Mr. James Martineau wrote to R. D. H. (London, 10 Gordon Street, June 28, 1862) when he was about to leave England : "I hope that in spite of all our negligences and faults, you will

be able to carry back with you to India some impressions of friendly appreciation with regard to the people and institutions of this country. The well-being of India and that of England are connected by the closest ties of mutual responsibility; the consciousness of which cannot fail to be deepened by every new friendly relation established between the citizens of the two lands."



## CHAPTER XIII

### EXPERIENCES IN ENGLAND.

R. D. H. availed himself, while in England, of every suitable opportunity of attending religious service in places of public worship. In January 1862 he visited the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which he describes as a magnificent building, where he heard the great Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon. He says that owing to his ungainly appearance Spurgeon was called the Rev. Mr. Gorilla. He does not appear to have been very favourably impressed, for he writes: "He (Spurgeon) talked, to my mind, rabidly, dragged poor old Socrates on the platform and poured a torrent of abuse on his devoted head, as if the rage of Xantippe, in days of yore, was not enough. Spurgeon said Socrates was the most wicked of mortals! Shop-keepers of London patronize this so-called eloquent preacher." *The Nation* (1920) reviewing a new biography of Spurgeon by the Rev. W. Y. Fullerton thus speaks of that spiritual genius: "He seemed at the end as a figure extraordinarily unromantic, short, stout, drab, reading nothing, learning nothing, denouncing all progress in the Nonconformist churches, narrow, prejudiced, wilfully indifferent to the world outside." The writer states that

Spurgeon had little intellect and no talent, but that he had genius. Spurgeon's popularity as a preacher was something of a miracle. In February (1862) R. D. H. was present one evening at a meeting of the Manchester New College Debating Society. The meeting was presided over by Professor Tayler, Mr. James Martineau and a few other gentlemen besides several students being present. Mr. Martineau related an anecdote regarding Robert Hall the great Baptist preacher. R. D. H. got some interesting facts regarding Joseph Blanco White whose sonnet, "To Night," was called by Coleridge the finest in the language. *The Literary Guide* (October 1918) wrote of Blanco White: "White fairly 'boxed the compass'. Born of Irish parents, he was educated as a Catholic and became a priest. He left the Catholic Church and took orders in the Church of England. Becoming dissatisfied with Anglicanism he became a Unitarian, and finally finished his career as a sceptic." Mr. Morley, in his "Life of Gladstone," describes White as a heterodox writer whose strange spiritual fortunes painfully interested and perplexed Gladstone. According to Mr. Gladstone himself there was in Blanco White "a disposition to resist the tyranny of self, to recognise the rule of duty; to maintain the supremacy of the higher over the lower parts of our nature." About

this time R. D. H. met Herr Szapira, a Pole, who compared the condition of his own countrymen to that of the natives of India. As a dweller on the Bhagirathi he found bathing somewhat difficult and expensive while living in the great city on the Thames. *The Saturday Westminster Gazette* wrote in December 1904 about "The Romance of my Childhood Days" by Madame Edmond Adam, published a few years previously, and quoted the following passage from that book : "Grandfather did not wish that they should 'clean me' everyday—they did not wash in those days—water, he declared, made pimples on the face....One cannot imagine now-a-days how little they washed in our Picardy in the year of grace 1839." Writing on this subject in July 1919 the London correspondent of the *Statesman* wrote : "It was immensely chilling to the warm reformers in a Surrey district the other day to be told that the water service of England is not planned to give every person in the country a bath ! The reservoirs are not big enough, nor are there enough reservoirs. The wickedest Roman seems to have had a higher idea of cleanliness than the most virtuous Englishman. As usual the aim of the reformers has to be put further back." The following quotation bearing on the same subject is taken from the *Saturday Review* : "There are very many

English country houses with no bath-room, the occupiers contenting themselves with splashing in a pannikin. Even in more luxurious establishments there is generally not more than one bath-room to ten people.”\* While speaking of the bathing difficulty R. D. H. bears testimony to the fact that the “English people wash well every day.”

On February 23, R. D. H. attended afternoon service in the old Temple Church, “the pews of which had been occupied by so many celebrated men.” He noticed the tombs of the Knights Templars. Of the sermon he observes that it was rather bold for an Anglican church. The Minister said that human nature was not essentially wicked, although the entire Christian religious system is based on the idea of man’s original sin and the inevitable result of every man being born a sinner. R. D. H. observes : “There is now evidently a tendency in the Church towards liberalism.” The same evening he was at the Metropolitan † and heard a lecture delivered by Mr. George Jacob

\* Reproduced in the *Indian Daily News*, May 1, 1920.

† “With the co-operation of a London barrister, Mr. J. Clark, Holyoake founded a new centre in Fitzroy Square (the ‘Metropolitan Institute’), and here and at other metropolitan centres continued to ‘aim at something higher’.”—Joseph McCabe’s “Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake” Vol. I, P. 347 (London : Watts & Co. 1908).

Holyoake, the journalist, author and lecturer, who is better known as the founder of modern Secularism which imposes the piety of usefulness as a duty of life. R. D. H. writes in his Diary : "As the lecturer and his audience were all Free-thinkers, the lecture was of course in favour of Free-thinking and positive science." Mr. Holyoake is described in a character sketch which appeared in the September number of the *Review of Reviews* (1901) as the Grand Old Man of the co-operative movement in Britain. He was chiefly instrumental in procuring the Affirmation Act of 1869. On his return to India R. D. H. wrote (in October 1862) to the *Hindoo Patriot* under his favourite *nom de plume* of "Omichand" in support of Mr. Holyoake's noble attempt to raise funds partly for defraying the expenses of Mrs. Maden's appeal in the Court of Exchequer and partly also for promoting public opinion in favour of Sir John Trelawney's Parliamentary Bill for legalising simple Affirmations. Writing to R. D. H. from Dymoke Lodge, Oval Road, London, N. W., on March 29, 1863, Mr. Holyoake said : "We are all gratified to hear from you so soon and with such proof of your liberal interest in our Affirmation Bill movement. If the *Secular World* which I hope reached you in due course (I sent you copies by my own hand) you will have seen how much we

value the notice and proposed subscription in the *Hindoo Patriot*." Mrs. Maden had lost her case in the County Court at Rochdale only because she was found to be an Agnostic and could not be sworn. On another occasion he thus refers to a visit to the Secularist leader: "In the evening (June 4, 1862) went, according to an invitation, to the philosophic retreat of Mr. G. J. Holyoake—the Dymoke Lodge. It is situated in Anglo-Indian fashion, *i.e.*, the Bungalow surrounded with a compound and trees. The evening being very bright, I altogether fancied myself in Bengal in October." In his "Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake," Mr. Joseph McCabe quotes the following passage from a letter written by Holyoake to his friend John Stuart Mill: "I have a pleasant home here, surrounded by more than half an acre of plantation. Mr. Das Haldar, a Bengal gentleman who visited me, called it a Bungalow. In summer it is a paradise." The present writer sent Mr. Holyoake in 1903 a copy of "The English Diary of an Indian Student" and received from him the following acknowledgment: "The 'Diary' has great fascination for me as I know most of the persons the Diarist saw, and the places he went to, and am pleased at the great judgment he shows in the narrative. He seldom errs in his description."

He was the first to apply the term "Jingo" to a section of the Conservative party who in 1878 had been clamouring for war with Russia. It was stated in the *Review of Reviews* (September 1901) that when Mr. Gladstone pressed upon him the acceptance of a pension he refused it on the ground that his immediate means sufficed for his wants and he did not feel that it would be right or consistent for him as an old reformer to be chargeable to the taxes. He died in 1906.

Early in March of the same year (1862) R.D.H. witnessed a remarkable heresy trial in the historical Court of Arches, the most ancient consistory court of England, the Dean of which anciently held his court under the arches of Bow Church. Brewer says that the present structure was the work of Sir Christopher Wren. The trial witnessed by R. D. H. was that of Henry Bristow Wilson, a clergyman who was charged in respect of certain passages in his "Essays and Reviews" which were alleged to have been "contrary to, or inconsistent with, the doctrines of the Church of England." The charges "failed to be sustained" and Mr. Wilson was acquitted. The case was carried up to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The Courts protected Mr. Wilson in his freedom of speech. He remained unmolested in his living, and the "nugatory" thunders of Convocation, as

Dean Stanley called them, could do nothing to deprive him of it. The matter is thus referred to in Morley's "Life of Gladstone": "In 1860 a volume appeared containing seven 'Essays and Reviews' by seven different writers, six of them clergymen of the Church of England. The topics were miscellaneous, the treatment of them, with one exception, was neither learned nor weighty, the tone was not absolutely uniform, but it was as a whole mildly rationalistic, and the negations, such as they were, exhibited none of the fierceness or aggression that had marked the old controversies about Hampden, or Tract Ninety, or Ward's *Ideal*. A storm broke upon the seven writers that they little intended to provoke. To the apparent partnership among them was severely imputed a sinister design. They were styled 'the Septem contra Christum'—six ministers of religion combining to assail the faith they outwardly professed—seven authors of an immoral rationalistic conspiracy. Two of them were haled into the courts, one for casting doubt upon the inspiration of the Bible, the other for impugning the eternity of the future punishment of the wicked. The Queen in Council upon appeal was advised to reverse a hostile judgment in the court below (1864), and Lord Chancellor Westbury delivered the decision in a tone described



in the irreverent epigram of the day as 'dismissing eternal punishment with costs.' This carried further, or completed, the principle of the Gorham judgment fourteen years before, and just as that memorable case determined that neither the evangelical nor the high anglican school should drive out the other, so the judgment in the case of *Essays and Reviews* determined that neither should those two powerful sections drive out the new critical, rationalistic, liberal, or latitudinarian school."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ENGLISH TOWN AND COUNTRY LIFE.

We have already seen that R. D. H. had, while residing in England, to depend entirely upon his own pecuniary resources. The following extract from his rough Diary (March 1862) indicates how he managed to get along without remittances from home : "I am pretty smoothly going on with my studies at the College, delivering lectures here and there, contributing to the Press, sometimes with success, at others meeting with disappointment of course, acting as professor of languages, translating for the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, reading newspaper advertisements for Holloway etc. I receive a guinea a column (such as, in *All the Year Round*) for my articles, three guineas and rail expenses for lectures, and five shillings an hour for lessons given. My object is to stand as much on my own legs as possible. Without Mr. Pratt's aid, however, my income would have been insufficient for my support." He was particularly grateful to Mr. Hodgson Pratt for the kind help so cordially extended to him and as soon as possible after his return to India he repaid all the money which that good man had spent on his account. In a very friendly letter dated May 28, 1866 Mr. Pratt wrote : "It

gives me the greatest satisfaction to have been able to do you some little service, for I feel sure that you well deserve any aid of the kind. I rejoice further that you have found yourself able to repay the money which I lent to you, for I am sure that it will give you the satisfaction which comes of doing a right thing at some considerable sacrifice.\* It will also be a great satisfaction to me to be able to state to English friends that my Hindu friend kept his word with me." One of his intimate English fellow-students residing at University Hall was Mr. Edward S. Howse with whom he spent the Easter of 1862 at Reading. He thus describes his railway journey with Mr. Howse from Waterloo Station : "The day being tolerably clear, saw the somewhat misty grandeur of the commercial metropolis of the world while passing over the Waterloo Bridge. On the

\*Two somewhat striking instances are known to the present writer of R. D. H's readiness to sacrifice his own worldly advantage in order to benefit others. He was the sole surviving heir of his maternal grand-father but he gladly waived his right to the house-property at Jagaddal which he thus inherited. On the death of Jwala-prasad, the son of his uncle Durga-prasad, he became entitled to the property left by that gentleman at Ludhiana in the Punjab, but he allowed the property to go to a collateral branch of the Haldar family.

right side appeared the towers of the Houses of Parliament; the Westminster Abbey etc.; also a huge stone lion looking towards the Thames—a sort of statuary, in which the British excel. On the left, were the cloud-capped dome of St. Paul's and the steeples of churches soaring far above the height of ordinary buildings. Steamers were plying in the river with the rapidity of the eagle in the air. Of course, all things combined, make London the focus of life. But the Thames is a puny stream in comparison with our glorious ones in India; and we crossed it almost in no time, leaving the extensive view of the town behind. Waterloo Station is neither so large, nor so splendid as some of the other stations; this being the first time I saw it. At 4-45 the iron horse neighed, and began to move on so high a level that the tops of houses appeared quite within reach. What a change from the smoke and bustle of the city to the green beauty and quietness of the country! The day being a tolerable one, the delight was unalloyed. Passed through Ascot, celebrated for its horse races. The country around is rather desert-like; in the horizon rose a few Scotch firs exactly resembling the palms; and so I was forcibly reminded of some parts of Bengal. Alas! Bengal can be generally compared

with only the bad or indifferent features of England ! Arrived at Reading ( 44 miles from London ) at a little before 6-30 P. M. Mr. Henry Howse, Miss H. and Miss Austin were waiting for us ; and we lost no time in sitting down to tea. Of course, Miss H. was at the head of the table. Tea was preceded by prayer and hymn accompanied with the organ, an instrument which I saw for the first time in a private gentleman's house. Having thus refreshed ourselves, we retired to the drawing-room, and I was invited by the ladies to play at chess. The ladies beat me unmercifully twice, and I then had recourse to the photographic album. The piano was played on, and Miss A. and the Messrs. H. sang till supper was ready below. Retired to bed after eleven." During his stay at Reading R. D. H. visited the famous biscuit factory of Messrs. Huntley and Palmer. Under the directions of Mr. Palmer the foreman showed him round the works and he watched the process of manufacture from flour to biscuit and cake, and the process of packing in tin boxes and butts ready for delivery to the wagon-drivers. He observes : "It is impossible for me to describe the process. It far transcends anything which the Hindus imagined Biswakarma could perform." On the same day he visited and made a close inspection of the Jail at Reading in company with

the two Howse brothers. He also saw the ruins of Reading Abbey which was founded by Henry I, who and his queen were buried there. He walked with his hosts to Three Mile Cross to see Miss Mary Russell Mitford's "Shallowfield Cottage" which was at the time unoccupied. Miss Mitford was a noted prose writer and poet of the last century. She died in 1855. In 1835 was published her "Belford Regis : or Sketches of a Country Town." The country town was Reading. Later on he enjoyed an excursion to Newbury where he was the guest of Mr. R. Shelley. He tells us in his Diary how he went out with Miss Austin, Mr. E. S. Howse, Mr. H. Preston of London and his host and passed through woods and meadows walking up hill and down dale along "purling streams, the glories of England—all that inspired her favoured sons and daughters." "What wonder (he observes) that Englishmen in India should long for 'home', such an exquisitely beautiful and sweet home as this? Howse made a very just remark that the secret of the greatness of England was the readiness with which Englishmen could abandon this paradise of existence for the toil and hardships of the battle-field when their country's interest was at stake. Yes, this is true heroism !" On April 21, he went with Mr. E. S. Howse and his sister to Windsor by

rail and saw the Castle and then drove to Stoke Poges where the poet Gray lies buried. The scene in the church-yard forcibly reminded him of the immortal Elegy. April 22 was a quiet day spent in the house of Mr. Howse. He collected facts and anecdotes relating to Rammohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj from books in his host's Library.\* It made him sad to think of the want of zeal and appreciation shown by his own countrymen regarding biographical and historical records of important men and events. On the following day he went over to Coventry through Leamington. On the way at Banbury he enjoyed some of the famous sweets associated with that

\*In 1862 R. D. H. wrote to the *Athenæum* and other English papers from University Hall, Gordon Square, telling the public that he will take it kind if anything known about the deceased Rajah be sent to him forthwith. He stated that he was desirous of compiling something like an adequate biography of the Rajah. In this manner he succeeded in collecting some interesting facts and anecdotes concerning the great man but he could not make use of them. They were preserved in a box which was stolen from the possession of the present writer in 1895 at Burdwan. They had been placed by R. D. H. at the disposal of Miss Sophia Dobson Collet for her "Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy," and have been to some extent utilised in that work which was completed by a friend of that lady, after her death, and was published in London (Harold Collet, 20 Bucklersbury) in 1900.

place. Banbury was famous for its cakes even in Ben Jonson's time. He introduces a Banbury cake-maker in his "Bartholomew Fair." At the Brandon Railway Station the conversation turned on a great battle which had been recently fought in America where the Civil War was then in progress. *The New York Herald* had stated that about twenty thousand Federals and more than thirty-five thousand Confederates had fallen in the battle. Mr. Edward Howse regarded this as a defeat of the Federals as he shrewdly inferred that they had understated their own loss and exaggerated that of their enemy. R. D. H. thereupon observed that when the English people are engaged in a war similar allowance must presumably be made regarding reports emanating from English sources. Mr. Howse retorted : "The English are not Americans ; they are noted for their love of accuracy and truth." R. D. H. rejoined that the English had always some reason ready to support their own case. He adds in his Diary : "The truth is that I do not believe in the correctness of what is generally stated during the time of war. If the English nation make an inaccurate statement it is apparently justified by their greatness." This was amply verified by events connected with the invasion of Afghanistan by the British in 1878-79. The



dismissal by General Roberts of Mr. Malcolm McPherson, the *Standard's* correspondent from the Kurram Field Force attracted public attention early in 1879. The *Englishman* (May 10) said that General Roberts was not the only General in Afghanistan who was ambitious of cooking the telegrams of special correspondents to the London Press. "For the offence of calling a spade a spade," wrote the *Civil and Military Gazette*, "Mr. Frederic Boyle, the well-known correspondent of the *Standard*, has suffered the penalty which promises in time to acquire the full force of a species of martial law." The *Statesman* (February 24) referring to the case of Mr. McPherson said that it would "make it perfectly clear on what terms news from our troops in Afghanistan has been allowed to reach the Press, and how slender are its claims to our respect." The *Englishman* wrote in April in an article on the Afghan war: "Though not above a euphuistic eclecticism in the collation of facts for the edification of the public, the Government of India is not yet sufficiently educated in the art of deception to be able to conceal the partial character of its half told tales." About this time the *Statesman* quoted the following from the *Bombay Review* which it referred to as a paper "edited by a journalist of long established reputation

in India" : "Let us conquer the country if necessary, and cow the population of Cabul into abject submission ; but there can be no need, nor is it decent, to make British soldiers into butchers. It seems too plain that the refusal to permit special correspondents to accompany General Roberts was prompted by a desire to prevent reports of the 'vengeance parties' getting into the press here and at home."

To return to R. D. H. who had been waiting at the Brandon Railway Station to meet his friend Mr. Twamley who was expected from London. As Mr. Twamley did not turn up he left the Railway Station and walked on to Ryton with his companions, the two Howse brothers and Mr. Carpenter (Dr. W. B. Carpenter's son). On the way they were overtaken by a shower of rain. He recalls the old English tag about April showers which bring May flowers. \* On arrival at Ryton, which he describes as a charming village, he and his friends were very kindly received by Miss Mary Freeman and her two sisters, one of whom was married to Mr. Twamley, who

\* "Whan that Aprille with hise schoures soote  
The droghte of Marche hath porced to the roote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour ;—" &c.  
—Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Ellesmere Ms.).

arrived in the house late in the evening. Miss Mary Freeman was a noble Englishwoman of broad sympathies. She regularly wrote to R. D. H. after his return to India. Writing from Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Nr. Coventry, on January 9, 1887 she said: "I am truly glad to have your account of India, that you think it is on the whole well governed. The more natives—the cultured ones—are officially in the Government, the better it will be, in my poor opinion, for all parties. In England, I fear we are not going forward, and it will require a firm hand and a kind heart to settle Ireland."

Mr. Edward S. Howse on receiving from the present writer a copy of the "English Diary," wrote (December 20, 1903): "It recalls to me many pleasant days spent in his company, and intercourse that was always agreeable to me and, what is more, of benefit to me. There was no man for whom I justly entertained a higher respect than for your father, and this feeling remained with me throughout our correspondence subsequent to his return to India, and until his lamented death. Distance, and other interests on both sides, stood in the way of a frequent interchange of letters; but when they came, his to me were always welcome and most highly prized, and I kept on hoping until the end that

we might yet some day see his face again in England. It was not ordained so to be, but I can assure you that his memory remains with me fresh and green, and will so remain until my last day." His sister, Miss Elizabeth Howse wrote from Richmond, Surrey, on January 26, 1904: "His English friends have, I feel sure, never forgotten your father. I recall with a great deal of pleasure his visits to us at Reading. It was my first acquaintance with a courteous Hindoo gentleman giving me a very pleasing impression of the gentlemen of your highly cultured nation."

Of all his College pals at University Hall there was none whose acquaintance R. D. H. cultivated with greater pleasure than that of Mr. C. E. Schwann, a young man of enlightened views and broad sympathies, whom he refers to in his Diary as "a Liberal maintaining that India should be left to the Indians. He holds, England should educate Indians to govern themselves; highly approves of able Indians being appointed to responsible posts." In 1861 he enjoyed Christmas merrily in the family circle of Mr. Schwann. This gentleman entered the House of Commons in the Liberal interests in 1886 as representative of Manchester, North Division, and held that seat for many years. He retired from Parliament in 1914. He was

made a baronet in 1906. At the close of 1913 he changed his surname to Swann. He has throughout been a sincere friend and a staunch champion of India both in and out of Parliament. In August 1903 he wrote to the present writer : "I always felt much respect for your father and learnt from him and from Mr. Monomohan Ghose to take an interest in Indian fellow-subjects and to value their high intellectual gifts and ideals." In 1891, while touring in India, Mr. Schwann in the course of a public speech delivered at Agra, made a touching reference to R. D. H. as his fellow-student in London.

## CHAPTER XV

### BACK TO BENGAL

On April 24, he started after breakfast from Ryton on a carriage drive to Stratford-on-Avon with Miss Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. Twamley, the Howse brothers and Mr. Carpenter. He was charmed with the country he passed through, and on the way he was shown a giant oak which was supposed to mark the very centre of England. He looked in at Warwick Castle where he saw the rich collection of ancient relics. He noticed a large piece of bone which is believed to be a rib of the fabulous dun cow of Dunsmore heath which was slain by Sir Guy, Earl of Warwick. He noticed particularly the paintings of Van Dyck, including a remarkable portrait of Charles I.

He gives an interesting account of the little town of Stratford and he has something to say about Shuttery where he saw Anne Hathaway's cottage. He returned to Ryton and spent some days there, enjoying the hospitality of Miss Freeman. On April 27 he took a long walk with his friends in the morning ; and in the afternoon Miss Freeman and her brother-in-law Mr. Twamley took him out for a drive to the old town of Coventry. There in a street corner he

saw the bust of Peeping Tom. R. D. H. recalls the story of Leofric, Lord of Coventry, and of the poor tailor Tom who was punished with blindness for venturing to have a peep at Leofric's countess, Godiva, who was riding through the town naked. The following is taken from Chambers's "Encyclopædia": "By a charter of Henry III, 1218, a fair is held at Coventry, beginning on Friday of Trinity-week, and lasting eight days. The fair was opened with a grand civic procession, a part of which was, in 1678, the representation of the ride of Lady Godiva. These processions were continued at intervals of from three to seven years, until 1826. Some beautiful woman who represented Lady Godiva was the principal figure ..... In 1848, the procession was revived with great splendour, and the spectacle attracted more than 15,000 strangers. The fair of 1862 was opened with a similar procession." The Coventry pageant was held in 1907. There were a dozen applicants for the rôle of Lady Godiva. Nearly all the applicants were connected with the stage and asked for fees ranging from £500 downwards, as we gather from a paragraph in the *Illustrated London News* (May 18, 1907) contributed by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. According to the *Daily Mail Overseas Edition* (June 1, 1907) the Committee of the Coventry Lady Godiva proces-

sion selected La Milo to ride in the procession as Lady Godiva and the traditional costume of fleshings, a light cloak and falling hair was adopted. R. D. H. appears to have had quite a good time both at Reading and at Ryton-on-Dunsmore. Early in May he was back again in London, where he witnessed the opening of the Great International Exhibition and also, accompanied by his friend Mr. Dennys, paid a visit to the Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition. He met Mr. Satyendra-nath Tagore and Mr. Monomohan Ghose who had just arrived in London. On May 11 he had tea with Dr. W. B. Carpenter, his wife and family. The doctor showed him his own magnificent microscope. On May 25 he attended Mr. William Adam's lecture on Rammohan Roy. The lecture was originally delivered by Mr. Adam in Boston, U. S. The manuscript was obtained by R. D. H. from the author and was published by him in Calcutta in 1879. On June 23 he sat for his examination in Law at the University College and a few days later he paid a visit to Greenwich. During his last few days in London he paid farewell visits to many of his esteemed friends. On June 30 he had lunch with Mr. F. D. Maurice and he dined with Professor Tayler and spent the evening with Mr. William Adam. On July 1, he called on his country's friend the Rev. Mr. James



Long and his wife. On this day he learnt that he had passed his examination in Law and secured the second certificate in Jurisprudence (which he had studied under Professor Joseph Sharpe LL.D) from the University College. The same evening he took leave of Messrs. H. C. Robinson, F. W. Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Twamley, Mr. William Adam, Miss Helen Adam, Mrs. Pratt and others. On the next day he took leave of his Bengali friends Messrs. Tagore and Ghose and passed a few hours with Mr. E. N. Dennys. On July 3 he bade adieu to his friends at University Hall and drove with Mr. Pratt to the Waterloo Bridge Railway Station, where Mr. Pratt saw him off. He writes in his Diary : "At 8 A. M. I shook hands with Pratt with tears in my eyes. How kind Pratt was ! He apologized for not being able to accompany me to Southampton. The cars moved, and I seemed to devour London with my eyes. Shall I ever come back to this paradise on earth ?" On July 4, R. D. H. was on board the P. & O. SS. *Euxine*. He went by rail, which was then the usual route, from Alexandria *via* Cairo to Suez where, on July 19, he got on board the P. & O. SS. *Candia*. He landed at Garden Reach on August 9 and went on at once to Chandernagore. Crossing the river he got into his national dress.

(which he had to borrow from Prankrishna Pal) before venturing into the presence of his old father whose susceptibilities he had so ruthlessly wounded by proceeding overseas. \*

During his residence in England important events had taken place in Bengal. Writing to him in May 1862 Mr. Keshab Chander Sen informed him of an occurrence which constitutes a striking land-mark in the history of the Brahmo Samaj as it indicates the commencement of the final cleavage between the Samaj and the general Hindu community. Mr. Sen wrote : "Owing to some heterodox step which I took I have been obliged to forsake home and mother, brothers and sisters. On the occasion of the Bengalee New Year's day I brought my wife to Babu Debendro Nath Tagore's where we both

\* R. D. H. records in his Diary under March 13, 1865 : "Having got reconciled to father, without sacrificing my principles, wife and I made a 'triumphant entry' to-day into Jagaddal, with the addition of a son and a daughter. Thus was Evil overcome by Good !" At this time the great Vidyásagar wrote to him in a Bengali letter : "I was already aware of your reconciliation with your revered father. Whatever the cause may be any differences between father and son must be deplored, and therefore the re-establishment of good relations is a matter for sincere congratulation."

attended service and then dined. This bold step against caste and Zenana servitude has excited great bitterness and opposition ; and I and my wife and a few others have been excommunicated. I am at present living at Babu Debendro Nath's with my wife, exiles from home , yet not forsaken by God. To Him I look up as my consolation, my joy and my strength. May I serve Him with my whole heart and soul turning neither to the right nor to the left. Truth will triumph and Hinduism will perish. Let us fight the battle manfully and leave aside all compromising policy. Practical earnestness is daily growing amongst our countrymen and the light has already dawned which shall hereafter thoroughly dispel the darkness of idolatry from this country." The head and front of Mr. Sen's offending was that he had defied caste-rules by dining with a Pirali ! The Hindu community recked little of his religious views which it treated as mere aberrations. Babu (afterwards Rajah) Rajendra Lala Mittra writing to him from the Wards Institute, Calcutta, on February 7, 1862, referred to more mundane matters : "I thank you for your kind note of December last. I hailed it with sincere pleasure as the first letter to me from a Hindu and a friend in London. I hope it will prove the precursor of many such from a daily increasing

Bengali community in the metropolis of the world, for I believe that ere long my countrymen will be sufficiently alive to their interests and those of civilization to know and to act under the conviction that a free intercourse with England is absolutely necessary for our advancement.....The death of poor Hurris has been deeply felt all over India. The Rajahs of Indore and Gwalior and other Hindu chieftains have testified their regard for him by voluntarily sending contributions to his memorial. This is what no Hindu now living can readily expect. The 'Patriot' is now conducted by Babu Kristodass Pal, Assistant Secretary, British Indian Association. He is an active and intelligent young man and will in no time make a fair editor but he will never be able, I fear, to supply the place of Hurris."

R. D. H. records in his English Diary (May 1862) that there were at the time only 4 or 5 Hindus living in London and that of these Purusottam Mudeliar alone pretended to preserve his caste. As a matter of fact he was, during his residence in England, thrown entirely amongst real English people and he took good care to choose the very best for companionship. The result was that he came to regard the people of England with feelings of genuine admiration for

their many high qualities—feelings which remained unchanged till the end. While residing in England he thus jotted down his own political creed: “I am one of those who desire for the continuance of British rule in India, and am not the less patriotic on that account. Some of the striplings, puffed up with reading books like the ‘Philippics’ of Demosthenes, talk (though nothing can lead them to action) of patriotism, of driving the English away from India; yes, I myself used to talk so when a lad of about sixteen, but deeper insight into the condition of India and the science of Government has shown my mistake. Who would let his child of ten go to an unknown country without a guide? Just so with the natives of Hindustan who, generally, are mere grown-up children, and actually require a nation like the British to govern and guide them. I therefore regard the British rule as a God-send. I am, however, far from believing that the Europeans can do with us what they have done with the aborigines of America, i.e., extirpate my countrymen. On the contrary, the latter cannot incessantly harass the conquerors so as to render their rule precarious. The past history of India is on my side when I say that even with the power which steam and electricity lend to the Europeans they cannot root out the

natives. The out-break of a handful of Sonthals has shown that the bite of an ant is sometimes too painful for the lion. I think that the late Satanic rebellion would have been more serious in its consequences, nay, the Government itself would have been at great hazard, if wiser men had not come forward with help."

The late Professor Harinath De has mentioned in his Introduction to "The English Diary of an Indian Student" the fact that R. D. H. wrote in Bengali under his pen-name "Omichand" for the Calcutta *Somprakds*, the premier Bengali weekly paper of the time, as its London correspondent. One of the chief topics dealt with by him was the great American Civil War which was then raging.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### GOVERNMENT SERVICE : BURDWAN AND MANBHUM.

Finding the door of his paternal home closed upon him R. D. H. lost no time in engaging a house at Chandernagore. He then proceeded by way of Burdwan to meet his wife. After a very brief stay in his father-in-law's house at Chandipur he brought over his wife to Chandernagore. Ordinarily, R. D. H. may be expected to have joined the Bar ; and the certificate which he had secured from the London University would have certainly enabled him to do so. But in the rather tight corner in which he found himself, on his return from England, owing to his father's attitude, there was nothing for him but to look for some suitable Government appointment. Early in November 1861, when he was in London, he had written to a correspondent : "I do not mean to be a lawyer for ruining my countrymen, as you say ; on the contrary, I am ambitious to obtain some appointment under the Government, when I return to Bengal. Age precludes me from the Covenanted Civil Service. If any choice is given me, it will fall on the next best. But of course, whether I shall succeed or not,

time must show. I am only doing my best." It would seem therefore that he was not particularly keen about joining the Bar. He called on Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. Mr. Ashley Eden, the Government Secretary, and Mr. Arthur Grote (brother of the historian, George Grote) who was Commissioner and Member of the Board of Revenue. He was appointed Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector on October 18, and he joined his duties at Burdwan on October 25, 1862. In this he was greatly helped by introductions from Mr. Hodgson Pratt.\* A year later he was transferred to

\* Mr. Pratt died in 1907. About the life of R. D. H. at Burdwan, his old friend Babu Nil Money Dey writing from No. 1 Dum Dum Road, Calcutta, on November 6, 1904 recalled a pleasant visit paid to him in 1862. Burdwan in those days was regarded by Calcutta folk as a health-resort. Mr. Dey says he and several other Calcutta friends were the guests of R. D. H. on this occasion. He mentions Debendra Dutt, Suresh Chunder Dutt, Ramá N. Nandi (the first M. A. in Mathematics), Akhay-kumar Roy of Raipur in Birbhum, Saroda Charan Mitra, Nilmani Cowar and Trilochan Singha. Debendra Dutt, son of the well-known Rajendra Dutt of Wellington Square, the pioneer of Homœopathy in Bengal, was one of the most intimate friends of R. D. H. Suresh Chandra Dutt was a member of the same family. Ramá Nath Nandi M. A., B. L. lived at Hooghly. Akhay-kumar Roy was Inspector of



Manbhum as Thak-bust (survey) Deputy Collector. He was connected with this district down to February 1869, with the exception of a short period in 1867-68 when he was deputed to Palamow on Survey work. In 1867 the district of Manbhum was in the grip of a severe famine, and R. D. H. was directed by the Deputy Commissioner, on February 20, to proceed at once to Barahabhum, and to take preventive measures in that Pargana in view of an impending scarcity. In those days officers employed in outlying places on special duty were left very much to their own resources and had not even a set

Police. Saroda Charan Mitra was a gentleman of Konnagar who married a daughter of Babu Kali Das Dutt of Bow Bazar, Calcutta. Nilmani Cowar was an assistant in the office of the Comptroller of Military Accounts and lived to a good old age in Thakur Das Palit Lane, Bow Bazar. Trilochan Singha was a resident of Jagaddal who held a superior ministerial appointment in the Burdwan Collectorate. The present writer learnt about three years ago from Babu Jogesh Chandra Dutt of the Wellington Square Dutt family that he and others had been to Burdwan as guests of R. D. H. in 1863. That was probably a different occasion from that spoken of by Mr. Dey. Amongst the residents of Burdwan one of the best friends of R. D. H. was Babu Madan Lal Seth of the Mayur-mahal Khetri family.

of definite rules to guide them. Official codes and manuals had not yet been thought of. In these circumstances an officer possessed of initiative found better scope for the exercise of his talents than is possible under the present cast-iron system. Mr Bernard Houghton, late of the Indian Civil Service, has in view a somewhat earlier period of Indian history when he writes in his excellent book on "Bureaucratic Government" : "Under the old regime the discretion conceded to local officers and their freedom from control not infrequently attained dimensions surprising to European eyes." R. D. H. records a rather curious incident on the occasion of his visit to Barahabazar Thana on February 28, 1867. He found Police Inspector Tara Charan Bannerji "humanely engaged" in reviving an infant received in the Post Office in a closed packet with the Banghi-post. This curious postal article appears to have been a Famine baby which its parents wanted to get rid of. R. D. H. was thus commended for his Famine work by the Deputy Commissioner (Captain R. C. Money) on May 2, 1867 in a report to the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division : "The result of Babu Rakhal Das Haldar's inquiries is most valuable, and the efficient manner in which he has performed this duty has been of material assistance to me."

An incident in connection with Famine work is thus noted by R. D. H. in his rough Diary on December 7, 1866 : "At Purulia. A special meeting of the Famine Relief Committee in which the question,—‘What is to be done with the orphans?’—was discussed. The European members held that the Government should make them over unreservedly to the Christian Missionaries. Iswar-chandra held the orphans should be treated as Hindus till they arrived at the age of discretion. I held the same view of course. We were required to give our opinion in writing." R. D. H. has jotted down in his Diary under January 26, 1867 : "The *Englishman* has published Sir Cecil Beadon's Minute on the Famine. Sir Cecil admits that the magnitude of the Famine was neither foreseen by himself nor by his subordinates, nor by the Press; that all that was thought sufficient had been done, that he had gone to Darjeeling on medical advice. The explanation will not satisfy all sections of the public." Mr. C. E. Buckland says in his "Dictionary of Indian Biography" that Sir Cecil was much blamed for his famine administration. He adds: "On an official inquiry, his famine administration was severely censured: always sanguine, he had failed to estimate adequately the signs of distress and the local

conditions : and he suffered from ill-health : his general administration showed marked ability."

As to the quality of his survey work in Manbhum a fair idea may be formed from the following extract taken from a judgment delivered by Mr. J. D. Sifton I. C. S., Assistant Superintendent of Survey, in 1910-11 : "Rakhal Das Haldar who surveyed and demarcated the boundary [between Barahabhum and Dhalbhum] in 1867 was a Survey Deputy Collector of Manbhum. In the absence of any contention to the contrary I presume that his survey was duly made under orders of Government and in the absence of any denial by the Dhalbhum party I accept the statement backed by Exhibit I that the Zamindars of Dhalbhum and Barahabhum agreed to abide by his decision of the *pargana* boundary. The same officer prepared the Bhuinhari maps of Ranchi district, and the closeness with which they agree with the maps of the present survey show that he was a very competent surveyor." R. D. H. tells us in his Diary how he managed to settle this knotty question which affected a boundary extending over 30 miles through dense forests and across rugged, hilly country. He summoned the Rajahs of Barahabhum and Dhalbhum to meet him at Mancha. The former saw him at Barahabazar on November 26 and

he explained to the Rajah how necessary and desirable it was to settle the matter amicably. On the following day he was at Mancha where the Rajah of Dhalbhum called on him. The rest of the story is thus told in his Diary :

*"November 27, 1866—At Mancha. Visit of the Rajah of Dhalbhum. This gentleman is about 25 years of age and of a fairish complexion. The first thing he did after salutation was to hand over to me his gold watch and to enquire whether it was going right. The Rajah was recently under a formidable criminal prosecution of having aided and abetted human sacrifices before the goddess Runkini. Col. Dalton has told me of his firm conviction that some people of Dhalbhum had actually been concerned in human sacrifices. The Rajah narrowly escaped very severe punishment. The Rajah visited me again in the afternoon and showed the usual want of intellect. Visit of the Barahabhum Rajah in the evening. It seemed D. had offended B. by a breach of etiquette. When B. arrived here, he sent a message to D. as to his intention as to the custom of his his first visiting him, for D. was a guest in his Raj. D. sent word that he was afflicted with a headache. B. did not bear the repulse with good grace. This little affair is unfortunate*

so far as my business is concerned, for it does not forebode well of the amicable settlement of the dispute.

"*November 28, 1866.*—At Mancha. The agents of Dhalbhum wanted two days' time to adjust the dispute among themselves. Preparations of both the Rajahs for a meeting. Both were attended by a train of Ghatwals and other followers, elephants, horses etc. About 300 people had assembled; the number was greater (I did not witness the meeting myself), for many people had arrived from the surrounding villages to see the *tamasha*. Both the Rajahs came out in *palkees* in plain dress and met midway. They embraced each other. B. advanced to the camp of D. where were brocades spread, brocade-dressed *pankhá-bardárs*, *chámar-bardárs*, *ásá-bardárs*, *hukká-bardárs* were in attendance. *Chámars* began to be waved. *Pan* and *atar* were offered and the wild Durbar broke up towards evening. No progress, however, seemed to have been made towards the adjustment of the long-standing quarrel.

"*November 29, 1866.*—At Mancha. I became uneasy about the amicable settlement of the dispute, and thought that if the people were left to themselves, they would confer for months without coming to a settlement. So, I announced

my intention of holding court to-day. At 1 P. M. I was seated in a mango grove under a canopy and both the Rajahs and their followers attended. I told them that if the dispute was not forthwith adjusted and they went to the Civil Court, both parties would suffer such pecuniary loss that even a decree in favour of either party would probably be a poor compensation after all. I then showed them how the question of possession should be settled. My object was to retain the survey of last year as much as possible and to make over some portion of the disputed lands to Dhalbhum. Barahabhum took one day's time to consider.

*"November 30, 1866.—At Mancha.* It required some skill to negotiate the affair which has brought me here. The parties began to yield inch by inch. I alternately patted and frowned. The dispute was gradually narrowed down to the possession of a single village—Chonra, which both the parties were equally obstinate not to abandon. As, however, they had promised to abide by my advice in the matter, I appealed at last to D's sense of honour, and induced B. to *ask* the village from him. It at once touched Dhal's pride, and he consented to give up the village. So the dispute was settled, not only with advantage to the parties,

but with pecuniary saving to the Government also, for I induced D. to accept the greater part of the boundary surveyed last season."

The following allusion to the famine of 1866 occurs in Hunter's *Statistical Account of Manbhum* (London: Trübner, 1877.): "There was some difference of opinion as to the total mortality due to famine in the District. About the end of August, Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, Deputy Collector, reported that the rate of mortality in Barábhum was terribly high; while the *samindars* and the police said that one-fourth of the population was actually dead, and another fourth dying. Both the Commissioner and the Board of Revenue, however, distrusted Babu Rakhal Das Haldar's estimate; and at the end of October the Deputy Commissioner went on tour into the south-east of the District, with the express object of inquiring personally into the question." We are told that as a result of this belated inquiry it was ascertained that in 21 villages containing 636 houses there had been 579 deaths and that on the whole the figures collected could "give only a rough general idea of the mortality in the affected area." R. D. H. had been on the spot during the crisis and he was in closer touch with the people than any European officer could possibly be. The rose-coloured reports of the higher officials misled



Sir Cecil Beadon and deplorable consequences ensued. As Mr. Houghton says, no high official will listen with patience when his subordinate and the public insinuate that in spite of the labours of the high-souled bureaucracy all is perhaps not for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MAINLY ABOUT SOCIAL REFORM.

In the midst of his official preoccupations R. D. H. did not neglect the amenities of social life nor did he fail to watch his country's onward progress. Amongst his brother officers at Purulia, the head-quarters of Manbhum, was Babu Iswar-chandra Ghoshal of the Ghoshal family of College Square, Calcutta, a Magistrate of exceptional merit, who while holding charge of the Jahanabad \* sub-division of Burdwan made himself a terror to the dacoits and other criminals who infested that administrative area. Babu Iswar-chandra was a great deal ahead of his time in social matters. He was a scion of an orthodox Hindu family which held a high position in Calcutta society. But in December, 1866, he boldly sat with R.D.H. at dinner as guest of Colonel E. T. Dalton, who was in camp at Purulia. A distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Henry Lucius Dampier, was also seated at the same table, besides a nephew of the host. Mr. Dampier was at Purulia to confer with the Divisional Commissioner (Colonel

\* This sub-division was afterwards transferred to the Hooghly district. In 1900 it was renamed Arambagh.

Dalton) regarding the Famine. Here is a rather telling passage taken from R. D. H.'s Diary : "February 9, 1867 : Sri Panchami at Purulia ; breakfast at the Head Master's. Iswar-chandra wore the guise of a Bengal Vaishnav, I that of a fast young man of Calcutta. We wanted to put to shame the old fogey in whose house we were to breakfast, for though Head Master of a school he kept a concubine at the school-house. Evening walk with Munsif Nabin.\* We met a few Babus with chequered *pirhans*, socks, etc., and remarked the changes rapidly taking place in our social habits. Ten years ago, few would dare put on a *pirhan*, or a pair of socks, now even *amla* are sporting Kerseymere *chapkans*, flannel shirts, English boots and shoes. Many young men of Purulia have learnt to drink wine and eat fowls. They are

\* Babu Nabin Chandra Pal of the Pal family of Chinsura. Another great friend of his at Purulia was Babu Chandra Narain Sinha, Deputy Collector, of the Raipur Sinha family. Writing to the present writer from 14 Theatre Road, Calcutta, on August 3, 1903, Babu Chandra Narain said about R. D. H. :—"I was never so happy as for the few months in 1868 and 1869 that I passed in Purulia in his company. There was scarcely a day that we did not meet for hours together, and his simplicity and sincerity made a very deep impression on my mind."

the sons and relatives of bigoted people of the *amla* class. Nabin said, ten years ago if one would walk morning and evening people would say, 'Look ! this man walks like a *sahēb* !'

R. D. H. had never ceased to take a sympathetic interest in the Brahmo Samaj. Those who have carefully watched its gradual evolution are aware that Rammohan Roy regarded himself as a Hindu and that his sole aim was to purify Hinduism by eliminating idol-worship. He declared his opposition not to Hinduism proper (Brahmanism as he called it) but to the "perverted" form of it which prevailed amongst the masses. "I endeavoured to show," he said, "that the idolatry of the Brahmans was contrary to the practice of their ancestors and the principles of the ancient books and authorities which they profess to revere and obey." As Professor Jadunath Sarkar has observed,\* Brahmoism could claim no originality if it merely meant negation of image-worship, for such a doctrine was by no means foreign to Hinduism. The erudite Bengali historian very rightly states that the distinctive merit of Brahmoism lies in its social and not in its doctrinal aspect. The crucial test of caste as a factor in the social life of the Hindus being inter-marriage

\* *The Modern Review*, April, 1909.

the Brahmos cannot be said to have set themselves up as a separate community till sometime after 1862 when Mr. Keshab Chunder Sen was ex-communicated by his caste-folk and when he declared war *à outrance* against Hinduism. Babu Raj-narayan Bose, as an old Hindu-Brahmo, was shocked when Mr. Sen openly declared his readiness to avow himself a non-Hindu. Said Babu Raj-narayan : "What a sad day it was on which Keshab Babu said so. That day, as it were, two brothers quarrelled and parted company. One brother remained in the ancestral house, *viz.*, Hindu society ; the other left its fold." A similar effect was produced by the passing of the Brahmo Marriage Act III of 1872. Pandit Sivanath Sastri says in his "History of the Brahmo Samaj" : "Its negative declaration, consequent upon the Act being intended for parties not coming under any of the existing marriage laws and not professing any of the current faiths, has given great offence to our Hindu countrymen, from amongst whom the present members of the Brahmo Samaj are largely recruited." As Professor J. N. Sarkar observes it is the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj which alone represents the logical development of Brahmoism for "there is no half-way house or halting place between it and (old) Hinduism, as the Adi and

even Indian (Bharat-barshiya) Samajes fondly imagined." As Mr. Guru Prasad Sen has observed, in his "Introduction to the Study of Hinduism," that so-called religion is not and never has been, properly speaking, a religious organization. It is a purely social system, insisting on those who are Hindus the observance of certain social forms and not the profession of particular religious beliefs. Professor Monier Williams likewise says that "Hinduism and caste are convertible terms, and in point of fact, strictness in the maintenance of caste is the only test of Hinduism exacted by Brahmans of the present day. In matters of mere faith, Hinduism is all tolerant and receptive." This was to a great extent realised by Rajah Rammohan Roy who adhered to Hindu social customs even during his residence in England. When in 1820 his nephew sued him in the Supreme Court in order to disinherit him on the score of his apostacy from Hinduism, Rammohan energetically contested the suit, and during the two years that the proceedings lasted he considered it advisable to discontinue holding the meetings of the Atmiya Sabha. His immediate follower, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, acted throughout in a similar manner as regards Hindu caste-rules. R. D. H. as a

man of the old school preferred to remain socially within the fold of Hinduism. As he did not like the idea of the Brahmos constituting themselves into a small non-Hindu community his old reforming ardour which manifested itself in 1853 in the garden-house at Palta appears to have cooled down by the year 1867, for he notes in that year, in a spirit of detachment : "The Brahmo Samaj is making progress. The Brahmi<sup>ká</sup> ladies are sitting at prayers in the church, mixing with male Brahmos, eating with English ladies like Miss Carpenter, and writing in the papers. These are certainly very good signs; but after all, I fear that the Brahmos may become another sect like the *Kartábhajds*." A few days later he notes : "Satyendra-nath Tagore is the first Hindu (Brahmo), I believe, who has brought out his wife in public at a Ball in Government House." This refers to an incident which created quite a sensation in Calcutta at the time. Mr. Tagore was at the time indisposed and Mrs. Tagore attended the Drawing Room with his friend Mr. Mono-mohan Ghose.

R. D. H. was appointed Special Commissioner in 1869 for the demarcation of certain tenures in the Lohardaga (now Ranchi) district under the Chota Nagpore Tenures Act II (Bengal Council)

of that year. The Kols (by which term outsiders designate the Mundas and Oraons, two uncivilised tribes ethnically distinct from each other) living in the Ranchi district of Chota Nagpore had been disturbed in their quiet independence by interlopers early in the nineteenth century when the British Government had not yet been firmly established in these outlying regions. There was seething discontent for some time, culminating in a rising of the wild people which occurred in 1832. The trouble was suppressed for a time but as the root-causes were not removed tentative measures and make-shifts had to be devised from time to time to prevent a further outbreak; and finally the Act of 1869 was passed "in favour of the Kols," to quote the words of a writer in the *Calcutta Review*,\* "mainly through the exertions of their friend Colonel Dalton, the Commissioner of Chota Nagpore, who, both by his writings and actions has done so much for the Kols that he may be called a second Cleveland." In nominating R. D. H. for the special appointment Colonel Dalton wrote to Government: "I have the honour to state that Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, Extra Assistant Commissioner, is in

\* No. 97 (1869).



my opinion the best selection I could make for the duty of defining the Bhuinhari lands in Chota Nagpore.....Babu R. D. Halidar has had long experience in demarcation work and has shown great intelligence and tact in disposing of the difficult disputes that have arisen and I have great confidence in his fairness and judgment. All this tact, knowledge and judgment is wanted in the Bhuinhari work and I do not think we could find a better qualified officer." The writer in the *Calcutta Review*, just referred to, said: "The Act is now at work—an able and impartial native gentleman, Babu Rakhal Das Halidar, well-known for his enlightened views and for his practical illustration of them in paying a visit to England is appointed Special Commissioner to carry out the law for registering the tenures." R. D. H. was engaged in this work from April 1869 down to the conclusion of the proceedings in March 1880. The Government Resolution, dated the 25th November 1880, reviewing the final report on the operations wound up thus: "The Lieutenant-Governor [the Hon. Sir Ashley Eden] desires, in conclusion, to express his high appreciation of the manner in which Babu Rakhal Das Halidar discharged his duties as First Special Commissioner under the Act. The earnestness,

industry and discrimination which he exercised in the disposal of claims, and his intimate knowledge of the duties entrusted to him, were conspicuous throughout the operations; and the interesting reports received from him from time to time proved of great value to the Government in the discussion of the various questions which came up, and in directing the working of the Act."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### OFFICIAL WORK IN RANCHI.

Although in conducting the work of survey and registration of tenures R. D. H. and his able collaborators, Babu Gopal Chandra Mittra, Babu Rai Charan Ghose and others, proceeded throughout with great caution and gave the fullest opportunity to the Kol peasantry to assert and establish their claims, a vigorous agitation was set on foot soon after the close of the operations. In 1889, two years after the death of R. D. H., a representation signed by three German Lutheran missionaries was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, expressing dissatisfaction with the work of the Special Commissioners and demanding larger benefits for the Kols. It seemed like the proverbial inch that leads to the taking of an ell. The zealous Germans also brought out a pamphlet entitled "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Land Question in Chota Nagpur Proper", which had the same object in view, and in which, amongst other things, it was asserted that if European, instead of Indian officers, had been appointed to conduct the operations the results would have been far more satisfactory. A cry had been raised previously that

half the lands of the country, comprising the cream of the arable areas, formed the Kol's birth-right. The German missionaries worked on the idea with characteristic thoroughness, and as a result the Kols, who had kept severely aloof from the Cross during the earlier years of missionary effort, flocked in to receive baptism in the alluring hope of becoming masters, in their own right, of half the lands of Chota Nagpore. The present writer replied to the pamphlet in a leaflet wherein he tried to show how the Germans were mere partisans and with what consummate skill they had exploited their own proselytising ends. "There is not the slightest doubt", ran the Report of Gossner's Mission in Chota Nagpur for 1873, "that the majority of our converts who apply for admission into the Christian Church are almost always actuated by purely secular motives." Missionaries in India have always taken the fullest advantage of such opportunities as present themselves to induce heathens and infidels to enlist themselves at least as nominal Christians. In his preface to the first number of the *Brahmanical Magazine* Rammohan Roy complained of Christian missions in India as constituting a departure from the promise of the British authorities not to interfere with the religion of their subjects and as taking an

undue advantage of the fact that Christianity was the religion of the conqueror. The Rajah suggested, in effect, that the superiority of the Christian religion should not be advocated "by means of abuse and insult or by affording the hope of worldly gain", but "by force of argument alone". Experience shows that zealotry sometimes renders one insensible to the finer feelings of humanity and that a man's sense of all proportion may be dulled and blunted by a narrow bigotry detached from all prudence and decency. About eighteen years ago there appeared in the *Christian World* a letter from a German Catholic bishop at Lahore couched in the following terms: "How marvellous are the Lord's ways! One might almost say that the Divine intention has been to make the parents disappear in order that their children might be led to the Mission and there find the Christian salvation. The last two periods of famine have brought to the Catholic Missions thousands of orphans, who are all to-day pious Catholics. If we obtain further donations we shall be able to receive, and with what joy! some more hundreds of children who have survived their parents, dead of the plague." To return to Chota Nagpur. Colonel Dalton said in a report to Government which appeared in the *Calcutta Gazette* (Supplement) of October

3, 1868: "Since the mutinies it [the agrarian agitation] has been chiefly fomented by the Native Christians. A large and influential body have combined, not to obtain redress for individual grievances; they scout with contempt the idea of being actuated by such notions; they go in boldly to re-establish themselves and their Pagan brethren in the position that tradition describes them as holding more than seventy generations ago when, according to the legend, they first chose a Rajah to rule over them. They claim as their own half the land in every village." Colonel Dalton further stated that "the party who are agitating the question will pay no attention to any reasonable suggestion, and they influence the majority who, but for these agitators, would be amenable enough." "The missionaries made no secret of the fact", wrote Mr. C. W. Bolton I. C. S., on December 16, 1879, "that their principal motive in stirring on behalf of the Kols was to preserve and expand the influence of their mission with their people." In a minute recorded at an earlier date, Sir Richard Temple had noted that the German Missionaries had been dealing with a matter which was "quite distinct from the spiritual concerns which are primarily and immediately the objects of the mission." One is tempted to refer to a parallel from the history

of missionary enterprise in another Asiatic country. Sir E. Satow, late Minister to Peking, in a speech at Cambridge said: "It was the interference of missionaries in civil matters on behalf of their converts that had been largely responsible for massacres in China." It is by no means difficult for an observer to trace to their real source the agrarian troubles in Ranchi generally and more particularly the Birsa rising which culminated in the regrettable incident at Dumari Hill in January 1900. Sir Richard said that the benefits asked for by the missionaries on behalf of the Kols "could be conceded in full only by depriving other classes, Hindu and Mahomedan, of something which they now enjoy." The Hon. Sir Ashley Eden in his Resolution of November 1880, to which reference has been already made, stated that it seemed an unquestioned fact that many of the Kols "embraced Christianity merely in the hope of obtaining possession of the lands to which they rightly or wrongly laid claim." In the report on the Census of India, 1911, it is stated that these aboriginal tribes went over to Christianity in the hope of obtaining assistance from the missionaries in their difficulties and protection against the coercion of the landlords and it is further said that "the knowledge that the missionaries do

not regard their duties as confined to cure of souls but also see to the welfare of their flock has undoubtedly led to many conversions." (Census of India 1911, Vol. V., Part I. page 220). Referring to the leaflet issued by the present writer, Mr. A. W. B. Power, I. C. S., Commissioner of the Dacca Division (who had been Deputy Commissioner of Lohardaga for several years, while the operations under the Chota Nagpur Tenures Act were in progress) wrote on July 6, 1890: "Of course you are right to stand up and vindicate your father's work ; but no one who knows how excellent that work was, is likely to alter his opinion merely because it failed to give satisfaction to people whose views are wholly impracticable." Mr. John Reid I. C. S., Settlement Officer, Chota Nagpur, refers in his final report on the survey and settlement operations in the district of Ranchi, 1902—10, to the fact that in the year 1857, the German Missionaries (who had established themselves in the district in 1845) had raised "a considerable following," and that "several of the Christians had successfully asserted their rights in the Courts before that year," so that with "the financial support of the European missionaries," and owing to other causes, the converts began to be self-assertive and "an impression rapidly gained ground in conse-



quence that to become Christian was the best means of successfully shaking off the oppression of the landlord." Mr. Reid states that after the Mutiny, when the British officers returned to Ranchi, an impression gained ground amongst the Kol converts that "they were a class specially favoured by Government." It is not at all unlikely that this belief was fostered by the zealous German gentlemen who at this time were very successful in gaining converts. Colonel Dalton states (1859) that there was a great accession of strength to the ranks of nominal Christians. It was quite natural for the Kols to suppose that the British Christian officers would support them, as Christians, against the Hindus and Mahomedans who had been implicated in the Mutiny and who had consequently incurred the special displeasure of Government. Mr. Reid states that the German missionaries adopted the theory of the Kols being the original possessors of half the lands free of rent. The battle-cry was taken up in all earnestness and the zealous champions of the Kols nailed the "Half the country" colours to the mast with characteristic determination. Mr. Reid says; "As the claim to half the lands rent-free was evidently capable of indefinite expansion, it was a very convenient theory for adoption by the turbulent raiyats who

dreamt of recovering their ancient status through the agency of Christianity". No wonder, therefore, that the German missionaries should have so strenuously urged that the operations under the Act of 1869 ought to have been entrusted to European officers. They had failed to keep their word with the tribesmen whose dreams about mastery over half the lands of Chota Nagpur were far from being realised; and something was needed to save their face. In 1868, before the passing of the Tenures Act, the German missionaries published through the medium of the *Friend of India* newspaper, as a part of their propaganda, reports about outrages perpetrated by Hindu zamindars upon the Christian Kol tenantry. A careful inquiry into these allegations was made by Colonel Dalton himself and that officer reported that "the Christians were more frequently aggressors than aggressed." (*Vide* Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette*, October 3, 1868, page 800.) In the *Gazetteer of the Ranchi District* (1917) Mr. M. G. Hallett I.C.S. says: "During the fifty years which have elapsed since the Mutiny, the history of the Ranchi district is one of agrarian discontent, culminating in the *Sardári Larái* and the Birsá rising. It is also the history of the spread of Christianity." That puts the case neatly in a nutshell.

As to the quality of the survey work done by R. D. H. in the Ranchi district reference has already been made to the opinion recorded by Mr. J. D. Sifton, I. C. S., Superintendent of Survey. Another officer, Mr. John Reid, I. C. S., Settlement Officer of Chota Nagpur, describes that work, in the final settlement report for the Ranchi district, as "excellent". He adds: "The first Special Commissioner, Babu Rakhal Das Halder, an officer whose name is very well known throughout the district, was mainly responsible for the work from the initiation of the proceedings."

In January 1877, on the occasion of the assumption by Her Majesty Queen Victoria of the title of Empress of India, R. D. H. received from Government (Sir Richard Temple) a certificate of honour in recognition of his good work as a Special Commissioner under the Chota Nagpur Tenures Act.

On the completion of the survey and registration of Chota Nagpur tenures R. D. H. applied for the Managership of the Chota Nagpur Ward's Estate, in the vacancy caused by the departure to England of Major Ninian Lewis, a brother of Mr. E. E. Lewis I. C. S., whose name is borne by the Sanitarium for Indians in Darjeeling. The Commissioner, Mr. J. F. K. Hewitt, I. C. S., who fully appreciated his work and worth,

supported the candidature of a European uncovenanted officer, Mr. C. A. S. Bedford ; but the Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. Sir Ashley Eden, nevertheless selected him for the appointment. R. D. H. remained in charge of the Estate until the end of March 1887, when it was made over to the proprietor, Maharajah Pertap Udai Nath Sah Deo, who had attained the statutory age of majority. Copious extracts are given in paragraph 97 of the official report on Wards' and Attached Estates in the Lower Provinces for the year 1886-87 (Calcutta : Bengal Secretariat Press, 1887) from the final report submitted by R. D. H. giving a full account of the Estate from July 13, 1867, the date on which it was taken in charge, down to March 31, 1887, the date on which it was released from the jurisdiction of the Court of Wards. It appears from this report that the value of the Estate, real and personal, at the date of assumption of charge was Rs. 9, 79, 000, while at the close of 1886-87 it amounted to Rs 21, 00,000. The manager stated in his report : "During the earlier years the funds were so low that adequate provision could not be made for suitably maintaining the wards and the junior Ranis of the late Maharajah.....During the latter years it was possible to invest the

surplus funds of the Estate in Government securities of the nominal value of Rs. 3, 02,900." The Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division, Mr. C. C. Stevens, I. C. S., (afterwards Sir Charles Cecil Stevens, Officiating Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal) in forwarding the Manager's report to the Board of Revenue pointed out that when the Estate came under Government management it was nearly five lakhs of rupees in debt, and that when it was released nearly a lakh and a third was made over to the Maharajah and the best part of a lakh had already been handed over to his brother. The Commissioner added : "Much credit is due to the management for these results and to no one more than to Babu Rakhal Das Haldar." The Board of Revenue said : "The Board entirely agree with the Commissioner that credit for the management of the Estate is due to no one more than Babu Rakhal Das Haldar who was in charge from 15th February 1879 up to the date of its release."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SOME OLD DIARY LEAVES.

The rough Diaries kept by R. D. H. afford glimpses into the old order of things in three of the districts of Chota Nagpore. There are references to shooting trips and also to encounters with wild animals in the course of his official tours. In February 1867 he played cricket at Purulia with Mr. G. J. B. Tuite Dalton I. C. S., Assistant Magistrate (Colonel Dalton's nephew), Mr. C. A. S. Bedford, an uncovenanted Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Mr. J. B. Birch, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Babu Iswar-chandra Ghosal, another Mr. Bedford and the two Deverias.

He notices glorious moon-light nights and many a charming sunrise, besides fine sylvan landscapes, forest-clad hill-sides, splendid granite boulders, primeval jungles, and extensive tracts of wavy, undulating country interspersed with patches of green cultivation. In January 1867 he was at Simlapal, in Manbhum, a comparatively civilized place. He writes: "Rajah Natavara Singh Chaudhuri, descended from the Oriya Brahmans, is a shrewd and worldly man. He with his brother and son paid me a visit; the Jubaraj is a handsome-looking lad of fifteen. Sripati Mahapatra was the courtier of an old

Cuttack Rajah some 200 years ago. By force of arms Sripati brought to his master the daughter of the Rajah of Sisadal (?)—Padmini. Padmini having got enamoured of Sripati without the latter's connivance, the Rajah grew jealous; Sripati took offence and came away with his retainers and several families of Oriya Brahmans to Simlapal, where he got the Raj." A few days later he was at Dulmi, of which he writes: "Thick mist in the morning. The Cake festival has commenced. Though the country has but recently been devastated by famine, there are rejoicings throughout the length and breadth of the land. Women and children are singing and chatting together merrily; the Dhenki is in constant motion, and toothsome cakes are in prospect. Several educated natives celebrate this festival. Such is the elasticity, to use Sir Charles Trevelyan's favourite phrase, of human nature that the dreary past is soon forgotten to give place to the delights of the present season. Large Himalayan birds (*Sorkháb*) abound here now. Rather disappointed with the ruins,—colossal Ganesa, Durga, Surya, Sita, Vishnu as *avatárs*,—they belong, I believe, to the age of Sankaràchárya, as might be expected from the descriptions of Anandagiri. The images could be referred to the age when Panchopásaná was coming into

vogue. Reached Ichchhagarh. The Rajah visited me—a more shrewd and licentious man to be rarely seen.” A year earlier he had visited the Jain temples at Barakar. He found that the most recent among the structures was about 600 years old. He read an inscription with date—“*Sake netra vasu tri chandra etc.*” He observes: “How beautiful these relics of a former age !” In January 1867 he was at Jhalda, which he describes as “a place of considerable importance to traders, the largest trading depot in Manbhum. Many traders in silk, lac, timber chiefly from Burdwan and up-country. The Rajah is in a miserable condition. In Asia Rajahs and Prajás are seldom prosperous together. Females bathe stark naked in public, and are notoriously of loose character.” In November 1863 he was at Begunkodar, near the water-fall. It was open country, with hills and jungles not far off. A “man-eater” had been on the prowl in the neighbourhood ; the local Rajah had been after it ; it had been officially reported to R. D. H. that the animal had been accounted for ; but he found that the report was false. He writes : “A few Brahmans of Sonamukhi and Banias have settled here for two or three generations. Trade in lac, silk and timber has made some of them rich. People speak a dialect of the Bengali language. They are weakly looking.



Females rarely pretty ; not so fond of bracelets and *sindur* (vermilion) as the Oriyas ; wear Telinga braids, some of them, *bánk* (anklets) of course ; use oil and turmeric for anointing themselves, and seem to be of not over cleanly habits. Ignorance reigns supreme. People divide every village into *rekhs*, a certain number of parts, whatever may be the actual areas of the parts. This is a fruitful source of contention between neighbouring Rajahs and villagers. All the Rajahs are said to be involved in debt. The Rajah of Begunkodar, Jagannath Singh, is an exception, so he sports shoes and a brocade dress." Next day he writes : "The Crown Prince (!), or Tikáit as he is called, attended by the Hikim (the Rajah's second son, the third and fourth sons being respectively called Thakur and Babu) paid me a state visit this evening. A tiger had been shot at by the Rajah to-day and much fuss made about it, though it afterwards turned out that the animal had not been hit at all." On December 17 of the same year he was at Manbazar. He writes : "The Rajah paid me a visit ; he seemed an intelligent man of about 32 or 33. Has fourteen children ; talked sensibly. Would established a school if Government granted aid. He is the grandson of the Rajah of Barahabhum [mother's side], who was killed by Babu Ganganarain Sing who, some

thirty years ago, created a great row, looting and killing people. Then the Manbhum District was formed, the head quarters having been at Manbazar. The unhealthiness of the place drove the head-quarters to Purulia. Manbazar contains some 500 houses. I am now passing through dense jungle, accompanied by 60 or 70 men, 2 *pálkis*, 4 horses and one elephant." He went to Ranchi for the first time from Purulia, on April 1, 1864 to sit for the Lower Standard of the Departmental Examination. He put up in the old Sirguja House on the southern side of the Lake. He was favourably impressed with the place, which appeared to him to be much superior to Purulia. On this occasion he met Colonel E.T. Dalton for the first time, and the Colonel at once asked him to breakfast. When, twelve months later, he was at Ranchi for his Higher Standard, he again enjoyed Colonel Dalton's hospitality, and accompanied that gentleman to the German Mission church. He was much impressed with the singing of hymns by the Kol converts. But the Rev. James Long says in the *Calcutta Review* [1869]: "We attended a Kol service, but it reminded us very much of a Latin mass in a German village. We believe steps are being taken to remedy this great evil." In October 1869 R. D. H. formed a member of Colonel Dalton's picnic party at the

Subarnarekhá water-fall, the Hundru Ghagh, where he passed a delightful day. \* In July, 1868, he visited Bankura on assessment duty under the Income Tax Act, as a portion of Bankura town formed part of Manbhum. Amongst the men he met was Mr. Wetherall, the District Superintendent of Police, who, he says, spoke Bengali wonderfully well. He writes under July 25 : "Rámtarak Rai, Principal Sadr Amin of Bankura, seemed a quiet, inoffensive man. Old Kanti Chatterji, the Deputy Magistrate, made my ribs ache by his funny stories about himself. Kanti is waxing fat like Falstaff. Mr. Grant, the Magistrate, a true Tory, notoriously exculsive, gave me an audience. He was pleased with my

\* In his intercourse with the better type of educated Indians Colonel Dalton was the finished Anglo-Indian gentleman and officer of the old class, full of *bonhomie*, with perfect manners and subtle courtesy. Some of his letters which have been reproduced in the Introduction to the "English Diary of an Indian Student" show his anxiety to introduce R. D. H. to his distinguished guests, such as the Viceroy ( Lord Northbrook ) and High Court Judges ( like Sir John Budd Phear ), who happened to be on a visit to Ranchi. Colonel Dalton was a constant visitor at Red Lodge, ( as R. D. H. had named his bungalow, after Miss Mary Carpenter's house at Bristol ), and a few civilians of the time, such as Messrs A. W. B. Power and F. A. Slacke, did not think it *infra dig.* to follow his example.

conversation. He laughed out-right when I told him that in England, on being asked by somebody who was our king and what sort of national flag we had, I had said 'His Majesty Victoria Bahadur, with our flag the Union Jack.'" The Tory Magistrate referred to was Mr. John Peter Grant of the Civil Service, who subsequently joined the Judicial branch of that service. He had a younger brother in the Civil Service, Mr. Trevor John Chichele Grant, who was Collector of Birbhum when he retired in 1903. Grant was a son of Sir John Peter Grant, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In November 1867 R. D. H. was in the Palamow Sub-division. He speaks of Daltonganj (which has been named after Colonel Dalton) as a small town, just rising in importance. There were then only three decent bungalows, the sub-divisional residence, the Assistant Police Superintendent's house, and Mr. Wilcox's house, where R. D. H. put up. Amongst the officers he met were Babu Sasi Bhusan Sarkar, Sub-Assistant Surgeon, Mr. R.L. Forbes, the Sub-divisional Officer and Maulvi Faizulla, the Deputy Collector. The Maulvi, who was an old student of the Hooghly College, Arabic Department, is described as a jolly good fellow.

In July 1869 he had to go to Palkot to seize the movable effects of the late Maharajah of Chota

Nagpore. He had a troublesome journey as he was overtaken by heavy rain at Tilmī before arriving at Jeria, where he put up for a few hours, under difficulties, in the house of Thakur Indranath Sahi. On the next day he was detained at Basia as the Koel river was in flood. He describes Palkot as a miserable place where he found a colony of Oriya Brahmans. He says that these Brahmans "pander to the lust of the Nágbansi family. A lesser Kámákhyá this. Everything how mean-looking and dirty! The Burra Lal, an Honorary Magistrate, commits great oppression; the poor people suffer in dumb silence." He writes under July 17: "After some paltry ceremonies the Burra Lal, heir presumptive to the Chota Nagpore throne, was visible. He and his children and cousins seemed a miserable set of ignorant and conceited fellows. How meanly do they live, and yet what pride have they!" In October 1870 he visited Sutiambé which, he tells us, is "celebrated as the original seat of the Nágbansi family. An apology for a hill, called Mundaraburu, near which shapeless ruins of an old fort; bricks; an old tank; a raised old hut, called Surajmandir, contained broken statues of Ganesa and three other gods, not identified, the door was beautiful, the frames nicely carved; the figures were those of Krishna and Rádhá."

## CHAPTER XX.

### A VISIT TO CEYLON.

In 1884, while on leave, R. D. H. went by sea to Ceylon. He left Calcutta on July 15, per *SS. Tibre*, a French Mail Steamer, which called at Madras and Pondicherry before proceeding to Colombo; and he returned by the British India coasting steamer *Nerbudda* which arrived in Calcutta on August 20.\* At Colombo he got to know Mr. P. Coomara Swami, the Proctor, who was a nephew of the late Sir Mutu Coomara Swami, Bart. The Baronet had, late in life, married an English lady by whom he had a son [about six years of age at the time] who was in England. R. D. H. observes that the fact of Mutu Coomara having taken an English wife had caused less popular disapproval in Ceylon than a similar event would have done in India. He writes: "Many educated natives have adopted the European dress, which is in all likelihood to be the future dress of all educated Asiatics. The Chinese, the Japanese, the Burmese are all apparently doing the same." † As a lover of gar-

\* The Diary of his Ceylon trip was published in sixteen instalments in the *Indian Mirror* (January to May 1908), under the head line "Bengal to Singhal."

† R. D. H. himself did not adopt the European costume.

dens and gardening he did not fail to spend a day at the Peradeniya Botanic Gardens near Kandy where he had picnic. He writes: "The garden has a large collection of palms, bamboos, ferns, orchids etc.; but it did not appear that any strict scientific arrangement of the plants had been made. The Mahawelli-Ganga almost surrounds the Gardens, which really have a charming situation. But as the whole country is so full of palms etc., the visitor is not much struck by the Gardens. The nut-meg is there; saw an *Amherstia* in flower. There are several *Grevillias* and *Araucarias* planted, but they have not yet grown into large trees. There are some large mahoganies. The gigantic bamboos are very striking. The cocoa plant, the vanilla creeper, the hibiscus, the golden and silver ferns, the several magnificent *Begonias*, *Marantas* and curious orchids were pointed out to me by the native gardener. Bread-fruit trees of several kinds were seen. The great *Talipat* palm, the cabbage palm, the jaggery palm are all very noticeable. The yellow bamboos are common. The lawns, the walks and the arboretums in the Gardens delighted a lover of nature." On his return to Colombo he went out one day for a carriage drive with the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ramanathan, J. P., a member of the Ceylon Legislative Council. He

writes : "Near Galle Face Walk and in front of the barracks the regimental band was playing. We stopped a little to hear, and then drove on. I noticed that several English gentlemen driving along showed respect to Mr. Ramanathan and saluted him. The Major-General in command passed and saluted, and Mr. R. said :—'Look, how simple and unostentatious we are here.' We then came upon the Chief Justice passing from his beautiful residence close by [ a nice villa ] to the neighbouring open grounds on foot. The Chief Justice too saluted us. Of course, in all these cases, salutes were exchanged. But it was noticeable that mostly the greetings were begun by the Englishmen. There could be no doubt whatever that the relations between Europeans and educated natives here were far more cordial than in India. Mr. R. explained that there was a community of interest between the Europeans and the educated natives here ; besides, the latter were less servile and more spirited and independent than the generality of Indians—traits which the English people much appreciated. There was undoubtedly truth in these remarks. So many Europeans have settled here that a community of feeling and interests must have arisen among the conquering and the conquered races." On July 30 he heard from Mr. Capper, the proprietor and



editor of the *Times of Ceylon*, of the death of Babu Kristo Das Pal. He had been informed by Babu Rajendra Lala Mitra, while residing in England in 1862, of the death of Harish Chandra Mukerji and of the appointment of Babu Kristo Das as editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*. "Who is to take Kristo Das's place?", he queries. Of Mr. Capper he writes: "He seemed to be a gentleman who had formed sound opinions upon various subjects. He has lived in Ceylon, with a few intervals, which he passed in India or rather in Calcutta, for the last 40 years; and there was no doubt that he was a friend of the natives. He said that in Ceylon Public Works were beginning to be carried out on an extravagant scale. The construction of the new Lunatic Asylum was cited as an instance. Certainly, the rage for costly buildings and for huge barracks for the accommodation of soldiers for a season only has not yet become so bad here as in India. The public money wasted is a crying evil." On the following day he was treated to some native music by Mr. Coomara Swami. He met Mr. Ramanathan and young Mr. Arunachalam of the Ceylon Civil Service. Later in the evening the music, which was quite enjoyable, was stopped and Mr. Ramanathan left, and R. D. H. had a quiet talk with Mr. Coomara Swami and the Civilian. He writes: "Both of

them had visited India and had noticed the sad want of independence in not only the Indian gentry but also in the Indian nobility. I do not think we, as natives of India (speaking generally), can make a favourable impression upon foreigners. We are often so apt to stoop too low. Even a Maharajah would be afraid of a veritable English loafer. Superior education for several generations, intercourse with foreigners, inter-marriages, better food and clothes—these can combine to make a better nation of us. Such a consummation however devoutly wished cannot be effected in a few years.” R. D. H. paid a visit to the Buddhist College and Library at Kotahena where he met the venerable Hikkaduwe Sumangala, the High Priest of Sripada (Adam’s Peak) and President of the Widyodaya College. He spent some time in pleasant conversation with the High Priest. Sumangala said that the Buddhists had fewer prejudices than the Brahmans—an assertion which R. D. H. readily accepted. In the Library he was shown a stone image of Buddha which had been brought over from Bodh-Gaya. On July 31, he had an interview with Arabi Pasha, who had been defeated in 1882 by the British at Tel-el-Kebir, while fighting for his country’s liberty and was exiled to Ceylon in the following year. “Though I tried,” writes R. D. H. in his Diary, “to draw

out of him something about current politics, enquiring whether he was reading the newspapers, he studiously avoided the subject, as it seemed to me. He turned the conversation to theology, as if I was talking with a Mullah. He said that he knew that all Brahmans were not idolaters. Brahmá was no other than Allah the Wahid. He said what he thought about the Christian and the Hindu Trinity. 'One could not be *three*, any more than three could be *one*.' On his voyage to Calcutta R. D. H. went ashore at Madras and visited the Theosophical Head Quarters at Adyar, where he met Mr. William Q. Judge, Mr. Hartmann (both from America) and the Society's Secretary, Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar. He knew very little about the Theosophical Society. He was told that Colonel H. S. Olcott was away in Europe and that the best-known Theosophists in Calcutta at the time were Mr. Mohini Mohan Chatterji (now the leading Indian Attorney of the Calcutta High Court) and the late Mr. Narendranath Sen, Editor of the *Indian Mirror*. He thus refers to his meeting with the Society's Secretary : "He did not shake hands with me and then explanations followed. Shaking hands caused an inter-communication of magnetic force, hence it is better not to do so. Our ancestors were wise in adopting the 'Namaskár' mode of salutation.

The custom of shaking hands had only been introduced by the English. Mr. Damodar did not upon principle shake hands with anyone !”

Before the steamer left Madras R. D. H. had an opportunity of meeting Mr. C. Raghaviah, the Head Master of the Theistic High School at Coconada, who was on leave. The gentleman gave him the correct original names of places which are now known under corrupt names, such as Negapatam (Nagapattanam), Trichinopoly (Trisirapuram), Tranquebar (Tarangapadi), Madras (Madhya-ráshtram or Chinapattam), Salem (Sailam), Trivandrum (Sri-anantapuram), Madura (Madhura), Mysore (Mahisura), Rajmundry (Raja Mahendravaram), Conjeveram (Kánchipuram), and Pondicherry (Puducherri). Mr. Raghaviah had his wife with him. R. D. H. writes :—“The lady has ‘ulki’ [tattoo] mark on her forehead, is fairish, stout, with long hair which is not tied into ‘Khompa’ [knot]. She reads her book, can sing and can play on the fiddle ; she sits as a deck passenger without covering her head or face. The Overseer, D. P. W., has his young wife and old mother with him. The Overseer’s wife resembles in her mode the Head-master’s wife, having no ‘purdah’ about her. Can’t we learn something everywhere ? These people are strict Hindus. The Head-master is a member of the Theistic

Society ; knows Pandit Sivanath Sastri of Calcutta by correspondence, is an admirer of Lalmohan Ghose, keeps a copy of Lalmohan's eloquent speeches, has no religious prejudices though he outwardly conforms to Hinduism. Upon my asking about traditions of their settling in Southern India the Head-master said : 'We are Aryans from Aryavarta, but our ancestors were driven here in South India during the Mussulman government.' He added that all Brahmans in Southern India came from the North. He said the Sudras were the aborigines of the country ; the Mudaliars were all aborigines. There has of course been an intermingling of races to a certain extent. A Society has been formed in the South for widow remarriages ; active inducements are held out for widows to re-marry." R. D. H. further notes : "I was informed that polygamy was going out of fashion in Southern India ; anyone not having male issue only cares to marry again during the life-time of his first wife. The females in Southern India have much more liberty than their northern sisters. They go about, not covering their heads or faces. 'Purdah' is not amongst the customs of the country. This fact is due to the Mahomedans having cared to obtain so little influence in Southern India."

It will be seen that R. D. H. was a staunch

advocate of social reform on national and rational lines. In politics his attitude was that of a patriot who gauged the real possibilities of the case and who, like that eminent Mahratta politician, Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, fully realised that nine-tenths of the spade-work that had to be done before India could take her place in the British Empire and in the world must be done by the Indians themselves. Instances of failure of justice in cases between Europeans and Indians painfully struck R. D. H. as they strike other observers. He wrote in March 1867 : "One Weedon kicks and kills a native and the Jury lets him off. Such an event occurs not infrequently, and because a native's life is not worth a straw." The Hon'ble Miss Eden (Lord Auckland's sister, whose name is so pleasantly associated with the splendid public gardens on the river-side in Calcutta) thus expresses, in her "Letters from India," the views of Sir Edward Ryan, Chief Justice of Bengal, whom R. D. H. met in England : "Sir E. Ryan who has been here for many years, says it is invariably the case that the low Europeans who make up a jury here always agree to acquit any man who is tried for the murder of a native."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SOME RESEARCH WORK.

For some years R. D. H. studied the question of identity arising from the remarkable similarity between the life and teachings of Christ on one side and those of Krishna on the other. He was inclined to think that the Hindus borrowed from Christian sources and he had a favourite theory that Chaitanya, who was known as Gaurānga or the "white one," was a disguised Jesuit. He was in correspondence on this subject with the well-known German Orientalist, Professor A. Weber. In November 1869 the Professor sent R. D. H. from Berlin a copy of his essay on "Krishna-jan-māshtami," to which was appended a short paper on an episode from Jaimini-Bharata in which he had touched on the subject in question. The Professor at the same time wrote : "I have great pleasure in sending you these papers, as I see from your letter that you take so warm an interest in the questions treated therein. My own view on the relation between Christianity and Krishnaism does not go so far as you seem inclined to go. In my opinion the latter is of *Hindu* growth, though much indebted to Christian legends and ideas. Your idea of Chaitanya's being a Jesuit missionary does not appear to me very likely. For after

all what we know at present about Chaitanya's time and life he was born (1485) thirteen years *before* the Portuguese found their way to India, and he died (1521) twenty-nine years after their arrival (1498). It is not very probable that all the particulars about his family [ see Wilson, *Select Works*, I, 152 ; Bhola-nath Chunder, 'Travels of a Hindoo' I, 29 ] and about his way of living and preaching are mere fictions. His preaching is said to have been going on principally from 1509-1515. He was a successor of Rámánanda and *Kabir* and he owes his monotheistic faith probably to the latter. Still, I shall be the last to deny the *possibility* of direct *Christian, viz.*, Jesuitic, communications in a time prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. And if you have but any *real* traces of *the* kind, you will be welcome to anyone who takes an interest in exploring the secrets of the past."

In February, 1877, R. D. H. thus expressed his views in a letter to the *Englishman* : "As you have said in a paragraph of the *Englishman* that the question of the 'supposed connection between the myth of the Indian Krishna and the narratives of the birth and childhood of Jesus' is an interesting one, will you allow one who has read and thought on the subject during the last twenty-five years or so to say a few



words *apropos* ? It is necessary to premise that I write under the disadvantage of having no access to books, and that the time at my disposal enables me merely to throw out the suggestions in a somewhat crude form. I do not know what arguments have been employed by Professor Tiele in the last January number of *Theologisch Tijdschrift* in support of his opinion, which seems from your notice of it to be that there are not sufficient grounds for believing in any connection between the myths about Chrishna and the narratives about Christ. If such be the learned Doctor's real opinion, I venture to think, with due deference to Professor Tiele's talents and scholarship, that the question could scarcely have been discussed by him with thoroughness ; and it is doubtful also whether he could have divested himself of his early religious influences while treating of it. The topic possesses a literary and historical interest quite apart from its religious aspects, and is capable of being treated without necessarily wounding the religious feelings of Christian people.

Dr. Tiele seems to think that the 'the only complete parallel in the birth narratives is the massacre of the children, which has numerous mythic parallels both among Indo-Germans and Semites.' Whether there are other parallels or not may

be judged by a glance at some of the prominent features of the narratives briefly stated below :

Christ	...	...	Chrishna [so written by preference]
Mary	...	...	Daivaki [in another way Yasoda.]
Joseph	...	...	Vásudeva [in another way Nanda.]
From Judea	...	...	Of the Yadu race.
Prophecies before birth	...	...	The same or similar predictions.
Star indicating the nativity			Light of Yogamáya indicating birth.
Herod	...	...	Kamsa.
Flight to Egypt		...	Flight to Vraja.
Massacre of children		...	Similar massacre.
Miracles	...	...	Wonderful doings.
Death by crucifixion	...	...	Death by being trans-fixed with an arrow.
Incarnation of God himself			<i>Chrishna stu Bhaga- ban Swayam</i>
Object—to save men from the consequence of their sins	...	...	The Deity's incarna- tion for unloading the world of its sins.
Christ the Shepherd	...	...	Chrishna the cowherd.

Nor is this all. Romish Christianity and Chrishna worship, as systems of religion, may be carefully compared, and found wonderfully alike. Why should, then, men like Dr. Tiele hesitate to admit these two systems to be cognates? I will endeavour very briefly to answer this question.

In the first place, their difficulty arises from bringing in the same scale the Protestant idea of Christ Jesus and the Indian conception of Chrishna. The difficulty vanishes when the latter is compared with the Romish conception of Christ. Romish Christianity and Chrishna worship have both been abused a good deal, and have called forth the ridicule of scoffers; but that is a point which is beside our present question.

Secondly.—They attempt to compare the narratives of Christ as given in the four accepted Gospels with the Pauranik myths about Chrishna. This is a mistake. In the early centuries of the Christian era hundreds of *different* Gospels were current, as we read somewhere in Josephus. The four selected by the Elders at the Councils (by no means giving exactly the same narratives) were the best, and considered the most authentic; the rest were rejected as apocryphal. Most of the latter have perished; some, or fragments of some remain—such as the Arabic Gospel, the Gospel of St. Thomas, etc. The myths even in these

bear a good deal of resemblance to Chrishna myths.

Thirdly.—They apparently forget that the narrative, or myths, had to be adapted to the circumstances of India, and that it would therefore be absurd to require ‘complete parallels.’

Fourthly and lastly.—The highly moral tendency of the narratives found in the four evangelical Gospels, as opposed to the apparently very libidinous stories of Chrishna, stands as a great difficulty in the way of their accepting the different narratives, or stories, as having been derived from similar sources. The difficulty arises from a misconception of the meaning of the myths in question. These were invented by Oriental mystics, or enthusiasts, who gave a two-fold meaning to their words, the obvious meaning being of a carnal character, with a spiritual meaning underlying the same. For my authority, I may refer to the Discourses of Sir William Jones read before the Asiatic Society, where that illustrious and sagacious scholar gave an explanation of the Songs of Jayadeva. Is there any difficulty in understanding what is meant by calling the Church as the Bride and Christ as the Bridegroom ?

Dr. Tiele appears to believe in the identity of Chrishna’s myth with the solar myth. I would

respectfully refer him to the pages of M. Volney, a professed layman, who never pretended to any acquaintance with the Hindu mythology. In the 'Ruins or Revolutions of Empires' will be found an attempt to discover a parallel between the solar myth and the narratives about Christ and his twelve apostles. Whether M. Volney had succeeded in his attempt like those who tried to find the sun in the Greek Apollo or in the Indian Chrishna, is a question which it is not my present purpose to answer.

I am very far from supposing that the narratives of Jesus were borrowed from Hindu sources ; I am rather inclined to think that the reverse was most probably the case. The early Christians who had settled in the western parts of India, may, for aught we know, have brought with them some Gospels of Christ, one or more of which may have been dressed in the Hindu garb. We have historical proof in later ages of how some Roman Catholic missionaries had tried to adapt their Christianity to the circumstances of the Hindus. Some such attempts may have succeeded better in earlier times. We may also ask by the way who was that Gauranga, *the white man*, who, we are told, had little regard for caste prejudices, who had given so strong an impetus to Chrishna worship, and who had

preached the religion of love? Could he not have been some 'Romaka-Brahman,' as Robert de Nobiles appears to have declared himself to be, in Southern India?

I am aware that I am liable to be accused of attempting to prove too much, and to upset all received historical notions. I need not care much about hasty judgments on my opinion; but, if any of your readers will fairly try to convince me to the contrary, I shall thank him for disabusing my mind of a wrong idea so long cherished."

In 1896 there appeared in the July number of the *Fortnightly Review* a contribution of the highest importance to students of comparative philology and religion from the pen of that profound scholar F. Max Müller. He referred in that paper to the fact that in 1845 two Roman Catholic missionaries, Huc and Gabet, observed extraordinary resemblances between their own ecclesiastical ritual and that of the Buddhist priesthood in Tibet, and accounted for them by ascribing them to the devil. Sanskrit was seriously studied (wrote Max Müller) for the first time by Wilkins, Sir William Jones and Colebrooke. Colebrooke noticed philological affinity between Greek, Latin, German, Persian and Sanskrit but attempted no explanation of the fact. At that time the generally accepted theory was that Hebrew was the mother

of all languages, and the idea was "so firmly rooted that it would have required great courage" to suggest anything inconsistent with that theory. The great philosopher Dugald Stewart was convinced that the similarities between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin were due to fraudulent imitation of Greek and Latin by wily Brahmans. Wrote Max Müller : "It was a German scholar, Frederick Schlegel, who was the first to form and enunciate the bold synthesis that the classical languages of Greece and Italy and the sacred writings of India must be off-shoots of one and the same stem, branches of one and the same family of speech." As we all know the theory thus started by one German savant received its full development at the hands of another great German philologist, Max Müller himself. In the article to which reference has been made the eminent Professor has brought forward cogent facts and reasons to show that there was inter-communication between Tibet and Christian Europe from the middle of the seventh to the end of the eighth century, in order to account for the resemblance between Buddhist and Roman Catholic ritual. We are further told that "the ordinary commandments not to kill, not to lie, not to commit adultery, nay, even the highest commandment of all, to love our

neighbours as ourselves and the warning not to do unto others what we do not wish others to do unto us, are shared by nearly all the great religions of the world. There can be no question of borrowing as in the case of ecclesiastical vestments. The mere date of the Buddhist Canon would be a sufficient answer to such a supposition." The Professor went on to say that it had been established that the Buddhist Canon [ Hinayâna ] in Pali was *written down* in the first century before Christ and that the Mahâyâna-Canon was composed and written in Sanskrit in the first century after Christ. The Professor wrote : "If the celibacy of the clergy, if confessions, fastings, nay even rosaries were all enjoined in the Hinayâna Canon, it followed, of course, that they could not have been borrowed from Christian missionaries. On the contrary, if they were borrowed at all, the conclusion would rather be that they were taken over by Christianity from Buddhism." Buddhism being admittedly an offshoot of the old Hindu religion the idea of Vaishnavism being derived from Christianity must be put utterly out of court..

Mosheim in the fourth volume of his well known "Ecclesiastical History" refers to some curious devices adopted by Catholic missionaries in Southern India to propagate Christianity in the



seventeenth century. He alludes particularly to Robert De Noble, an Italian Jesuit who, under the assumed name of Romaka Brahman, worked at Madura and achieved great success. He assumed, we are told, "the appearance and title of a Brahman who had come from a far country and by besmearing his countenance and imitating that most austere and painful method of living that the Saneanes [ ? Sanyasis ] or penitents observe he at length persuaded the credulous people that he was in reality a member of that venerable order." Mosheim adds : "The Secretary of the congregation de Propaganda Fide wrote in 1676 to Pope Innocent that Robert Nobili, although he called himself a Brahman, was not guilty of falsehood."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### CONCLUSION.

Education was to him at all times a subject of absorbing interest. He never missed an opportunity during his official tours to visit existing schools and to interest himself in the establishment of new ones. In 1874 he showed his cosmopolitan spirit by presenting a gold medal to a student of the Doveton College which was at the time a flourishing Anglo-Indian institution in Calcutta under Mr. Herbert Roberts, the Principal, and Mr. James Bruce, the Secretary. The annual distribution of prizes to the students of the College was held on December 10, 1874, in the Town Hall, the ceremony being presided over by Sir Richard Temple, the Lieutenant-Governor. The following is taken from a report of the presidential speech which appeared in the *Englishman*: "He said he must be allowed to point out that full justice was not done, either to the physical vigour or the moral virtue, of which the native races of India are capable. Of course the natives have their faults; we Englishmen also have our faults. But if they [the students] had seen as much of India and of its various races as he had they would know that these native races often evinced admirable physical endurance, and many domestic

virtues. It was very desirable that they should avoid the too common habit of depreciating their native fellow-subjects. They were specially bound to think kindly and fraternally of them remembering that on more than one occasion the leading families of Calcutta—the Tagores, the Mulliks, the Deys, the Chatterjees, the Mookerjees, the Ghosals—had liberally come forward to afford pecuniary aid to the Doveton, and that this very day a medal, given by a native gentleman, Babu Rakhal Das Haldar, has been presented to a successful student.”

He was greatly interested in Miss Mary Carpenter’s noble efforts in the cause of female education—a subject regarding which he had some correspondence with that good lady after his return from England. A public meeting was held in the Town Hall in January 1876 to hear Miss Carpenter’s lecture explaining the objects and working of the National Indian Association in England, and to urge the desirability of establishing a corresponding association in Calcutta. The meeting was presided over by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Temple. It appears from a report which was published in the *Statesman* that it was resolved on the proposal of the Rev. K. M. Bannerji, which was seconded by Mr. Amir Ali that a committee consisting of the fol-

lowing ladies and gentlemen be formed to carry out the proposed objects of the association : His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, President ; the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Phear, Mrs. Phear, Mr. Woodrow, Mrs. Grant, Major Bowie, Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, Babu Kanai Lal Dey, Rai Bahadur, Syed Amir Ali, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Rakhal Das Haldar, Babu Keshab Chander Sen, Babu Saligram Singh, Mr. A. Wagstaff, Moulvi Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur, Mr. W. H. Grimley and Mr. Chandra Mohan Ghose. R D. H. afterwards became a Life Member of the National Indian Association.

During his long stay at Ranchi R. D. H. took an active interest in the welfare of the Government Zila School, which in the seventies and eighties was the only educational institution of any importance in the District. As a member of the School committee he was able to do much useful work and it may be observed that his name is still associated with that institution. \*

\* Extracts from a Brief Account of the Educational Endowments and Trust Funds in Bihar and Orissa : "*The Rakha' Das Haldar Prize and Medal Fund*.—Babu \* \* of the Provincial Civil Service offered a Government Promissory Note of Rs. 1000 bearing interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for institution of a Trust Fund in memory of his deceased father Babu Rakhal Das Haldar. The interest of the fund is expended in the award of rewards or prizes in the shape

His interest in scientific subjects was practically confined to a study of biology and botany : but he gave his hearty co-operation to his old friend Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar in placing the Indian Science Association on a firm basis. He became one of the Life Members of that Association.

Antiquarian and ethnological research had great fascination for him. He recovered several stone and copper-plate inscriptions and old statuary in Chota Nagpore and wrote monographs about some of them for the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, of which he was elected a member in January 1868. Amongst the papers contributed by him to the Society's Journal was a valuable one on the Mundari language. In Samvat 1933 (1876-77) he edited and published through the Valmiki Press of Calcutta the "Nágvensábali," a Hindi poem by Beni Ram, containing the annals of the Nágvansi family from which the present Maharajah Pertap Udai Nath Sah Deo Baha-

of books or a medal to any student prosecuting his studies in the Ranchi Zila School or about to leave the school after matriculating. The fund is administered by the Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi and the Head Master of the Ranchi Zila School. Government sanctioned the institution of the fund in their letter No. 760 E dated the 1st June 1917."

dur and many other landed proprietors in Chota Nagpore claim descent. He rendered great help to Colonel Dalton in the preparation of his "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal"—a fact which the author has suitably acknowledged in the preface to that great work. Mr. W. W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account* of the Lohardaga district (London: Trübner, 1877) has laid the official reports of R. D. H. under contribution. Mr. H. H. Risley in his "Tribes and Castes of Bengal" (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1891) has expressly acknowledged the assistance and advice which he had received from R. D. H. The same author (Sir Herbert Hope Risley) has quoted from him (at page 450) in "The People of India" (second edition, 1915).

The taste for reading was more ardently cultivated by Indian gentlemen of the old school than is done by the present generation. R. D. H. was an assiduous reader and he possessed a decent collection of books. "My library was dukedom large enough," he seemed to think. His sons made over the bulk of his books in April 1912 to the Bangiya Sáhitya Parishat. In doing so they consulted their mother (who passed away in February of that year); but it would have broken the venerable lady's heart if she had lived to see the sale of the old ancestral family dwelling-house at Jagaddal which occurred in 1917.

Imbued as he was with the old Hindu spirit of reverence for the ruling authority R. D. H. conscientiously held that it was the plain duty of every Indian to abstain from any action that might impair the strength of the British administration. When in 1883 he was asked by the Bengal Government to express his opinion regarding the Ilbert Bill which, *pace* Mr. Houghton, "recalls the vehement outburst of race hatred that disgraced officialdom in common with the European population generally," \* R. D. H. gave this as his sole reason for opposing the Bill. It was a ground urged with great insistence by the entire body of European opinion, both official and non-official. His action in this matter was misconstrued by the majority of his educated countrymen who naturally looked upon the Bill as a small and rather belated measure of equality in the procedure of trial of European and Asiatic offenders. His old friend Sambhu Chandra Mukerji went out of the way, while reviewing a small book on Hinduism by the present writer, to damn R. D. H. with faint praise in *Reis and Rayyet* (October 18, 1884): "We wonder why he has not yet been thought of for the Bengal Council. The

\* "Bureaucratic Government—a Study in Indian Polity" by Bernard Houghton, I. C. S. (Retd.)

members of the service fitted by ability, by knowledge of the country, by administrative experience and by general culture for assisting in legislative work are extremely few, and he is one of the best of them. Nor is he disqualified by any revolutionary ardour of patriotism. He is loyal to the backbone, not only to the Crown and Constitution, but also to all the Powers of the hour and their most distant satellites. He was almost the only native gentleman of education who gave his vote against the Ilbert Bill." R. D. H. referred to this at the time as a sugar-knife thrust from his friend Sambhu Chandra.

In 1887 the Rev. F. Hahn of the German Mission at Lohardaga sent to R. D. H. a copy of the twelfth Annual Report (for 1886) of the "Mission to Lepers in India" (London: John F. Shaw). The little pamphlet embodies Mr. Hahn's report on the Leper Asylum and Branch Asylum for Incurables at Lohardaga. The report says: "The grounds for both these institutions have been kindly given by the Maharajah of Chota Nagpore free of rent. For this benevolent gift our thanks are chiefly due to Mr. Rakhal Das Haldar, the manager of the estate, who has again this year sent a donation to the Asylum."

R. D. H. was a great lover of Art, and he took special delight in good pictures. His own idea



was that Art should follow Nature and that its success depended upon the extent that it did so. He never concealed his dislike of the excessive ornamentation and the complete disregard for the human anatomy which characterised ordinary Eastern works of Art. In architecture and statuary his admiration for Greek and Roman models, which answered his own ideal, was unbounded. Mr. Nilmoney Dey in his letter, to which reference has been made in a previous chapter, alludes to his friend's love of music. R. D. H.'s favourite musical instrument was the *Sitar*. His favourite hobby—a pursuit in which he found absorbing interest—was gardening. His Red Lodge garden at Ranchi was the delight of his heart. He spent hours watching the germination of the seeds and the various stages in the growth of plant life. He laid out the grounds about Red Lodge Cottage, now the Roman Catholic Convent of the Ursuline Nuns, on approved principles of landscape gardening.

R. D. H. was on furlough for six months from June 18, 1837. He would have completed his fifty-fifth year, the age of superannuation under the rules, in December following but it was arranged by Government that he should have an extension of service. He was accordingly posted as Sub-divisional Officer of Baraset and he arranged

to take over charge from Mr. Tárini Kumar Ghose. An attack of brain fever prevented his departure from Calcutta and he expired on November 23, 1887, one month before completing his fifty-fifth year. In a letter to the Commissioner of the Chota Nagpore Division the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Steuart Bayley), in January 1888, while acknowledging the valuable assistance given to the Commissioner by R. D. H. as Manager of the Chota Nagpore Estate in connection with the steps taken to stem the tide of an "agitation among a section of the Christian Kols and Uraons of the Lohardaga district and the estate of Porahat in Singbhum," took the opportunity "of placing on record his sense of the loss which the Government had sustained by the death of that excellent officer."

During his last illness he was removed to No. 1 Wellington Square, which was very kindly placed at his disposal by his old friends the Dutts, and he was treated at first by Brigade-Surgeon J. M. Coates, the Principal of the Calcutta Medical College and Lt-Colonel R. C. Chandra, I. M. S. and was subsequently placed under the treatment of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar, the leading Homœopath in Calcutta. A touching obituary notice appeared in *Reis and Rayyet* (Nov. 26, 1887) which was conducted, under the able

chief-editorship of Sambhu Chandra Mukerji, by the leading members of the enlightened Dutt family. "We have been a good deal shaken this week," wrote the editor, "by the death, almost in our arms, of an old and most esteemed friend, who was an honour to his species, and far and away one of the best and finest of our countrymen—Rakhal Das Haldar.....One of the ablest servants of the Bengal Government, he had served in difficult and delicate situations with credit and exercised, over a large and primitive area, power practically unlimited without a stain".

It will appear from his actions and utterances as briefly recorded in these pages that he was not one of those light-hearted men who take life so easily and skim the surface of things so gaily. He was rather a man of a contemplative turn who felt called upon to give a thought to some of the problems of life which lay around him, as they lie around others, clamouring for solution. It cannot be said that he was an altogether successful man ; but after all, as James Hain Friswell, the nineteenth century essayist, has observed, success certainly is not, and never should be, the be-all and end-all of existence. The way to gain honest success, we are further told, "is to do just what a man can do, not attempting too much, and doing well whatever he does without a thought

of fame." In this view, it may perhaps be said that R. D. H. did not altogether fail of honest success. Throughout his life he adhered unswervingly to Carlyle's well-known maxim—"DO THE DUTY WHICH LIES NEAREST THEE, WHICH THOU KNOWEST TO BE A DUTY."



